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M O N T E Z U M A,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

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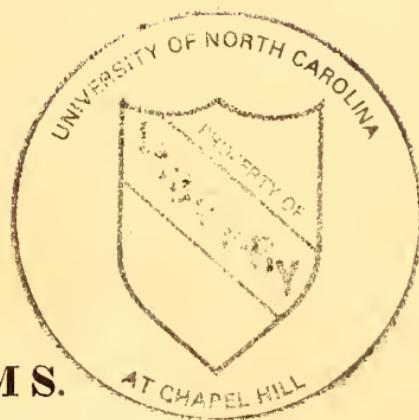
MONTEZUMA,

A

TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS:

AND

OTHER POEMS.



BY ST. JOHN DORSET,

AUTHOR OF THE TRAGEDY OF THE "VAMPIRE."

Σκῆψας ἐλαύνει λοιμὸς ὥχθιστος πόλιν.

Sophocles.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR RODWELL AND MARTIN,
NEW BOND STREET.

1822.

TO

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BYRON,

THIS TRAGEDY

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I THINK it better to anticipate a criticism, to which the present Drama is peculiarly obnoxious ; because, if it be just, I ought at the same time to acknowledge, as far as it goes, a radical failure, inasmuch as my error has been one of taste, and not of execution.

It may be objected to a few scenes and detached passages, that the style scarcely rises above the level of ordinary discourse, and some colloquial expressions might be instanced, perhaps too liberal for this species of composition. I should be sorry if this objection were held valid in the opinion of an enlightened criticism.

Whatever familiarities may issue from the lips of any of the *Dramatis Personæ*, they have

been intentional. It was hoped, the moral costume with which circumstances had clothed the lives and language of the Castilians (to part with which would be to endanger the truth of the picture), might be retained without much injury to the impression of the work as a tragic performance. I may have been in error; but I reckoned it an absurdity to adopt poetical language on every occasion indiscriminately, delineating characters so diametrically opposed as those of the Spaniards and Mexicans. I could not deem it injurious to admit a portion of those freedoms into conversation, which men of the world very usually indulge in, and which appeared to me almost indispensable in the discourse of such worldly libertines as Fernando Cortez and his followers: I cannot see otherwise how I could establish their historical identity. An undeviating appropriation of a poetical style to men,

“ Who sleep with head upon the hilt,
Their fever’d hand must grasp in waking,”

however sanctioned, and however specious, would not, I should apprehend, be in the correctest taste. I have, moreover, throughout this whole piece, taken advantage of the licence to contrast with better effect the principles and conduct of the chief personages of the Drama.

I know there will always be a poetical feeling associated with the dash and conduct of this extraordinary enterprise; but I submit with all deference, whatever poetry may belong to the invasion and conquest of Mexico, is (as is the character of Cortez himself), essentially and inextricably *epic*. I may be told of the highly *dramatic* narrative of Robertson; but do we not find all the accounts of this romantic age to be equally dramatic in the pages of our magnificent historian? In his *America*, as in *Charles the Fifth*, and the history of Scotland, it is the description of the writer, and not the subject upon which he treats, that I consider dramatic: it is the method, and not the matter.

The character of Montezuma is undoubtedly

a very fine subject for the Drama ; if it had not been, I should never have adopted his fate for the ground-work of a Tragedy.

It was once my intention to have embodied some of the more striking features of the Spanish hero ; but a very little insight into the subject convinced me it would not be well-judged, and that for the reason stated above. I have therefore been at the pains to invent a character, who might occupy a conspicuous station in the Drama, without profaning our historical recollections.

As some explanation of the violences I have here and there appropriated to my heroine, it may be noticed, *en passant*, that she is what I should consider a spoiled child, and her father's own girl. There is a family likeness I have imagined to exist, and which I have endeavoured to sustain, *ad imum*.

I am aware there are two Dramas from the pen of Dryden, upon much the same subject as the present Tragedy ; in how far the character

or incident in either of them may resemble that of Montezuma, is what I cannot say, because I have never met with them.

I have not limited myself within those bounds which I must have done had I written with historical precision. Circumstances are supposed in Montezuma, not merely not borne out by history, but often directly opposed to it; and as I have made free with events, so I have not been very tenacious how I modelled my historical characters to suit my own ideas of dramatic excellence; for this cause I have given an amiableness to Montezuma, such as we do not find him invested with by the historian, with whose words respecting him I think it advisable to enrich this Preface.

“ As the power of Montezuma enabled him to take this spirited part, his own dispositions were such as seemed naturally to prompt him to it. Of all the princes who had swayed the Mexican empire, he was the most haughty, the most violent, and the most impatient of control.

His subjects looked up to him with awe, and his enemies with terror. The former he governed with unexampled rigour, but they were impressed with such an opinion of his capacity, as commanded their respect ; and by many victories over the latter, he had spread far the dread of his arms, and had added several considerable provinces to his dominions. But, though his talents might be suited to the transactions of a state so imperfectly polished as the Mexican empire, and sufficient to conduct them while in their accustomed course, they were altogether inadequate to a conjuncture so extraordinary, and did not qualify him either to judge with the discernment, or to act with the decision, requisite in such trying emergency.

“ From the moment that the Spaniards appeared on his coast, he discovered symptoms of timidity and embarrassment. Instead of taking such resolutions, as the consciousness of his own power, or the memory of his former ex-

ploits might have inspired, he deliberated with an anxiety and hesitation, which did not escape the notice of his meanest courtiers.

“ Under those circumstances it ceases to be incredible, that a handful of adventurers should alarm the monarch of a great empire and all his subjects.

“ Notwithstanding the influence of this impression, when the messenger arrived from the Spanish camp, with an account that the leader of the strangers, adhering to his original demand, refused to obey the order enjoining him to leave the country, Montezuma assumed some degree of resolution, and in a transport of rage natural to a fierce prince unaccustomed to meet with any opposition to his will, he threatened to sacrifice those presumptuous men to his gods.

“ But his doubts and fears quickly returned, and instead of issuing orders to carry his threats into execution, he again called his ministers to confer and offer their advice. Feeble and tem-

porising measures will always be the result when men assemble to deliberate in a situation where they ought to act. The Mexican counsellors took no effectual measure for expelling such troublesome intruders, and were satisfied with issuing a more positive injunction requiring them to leave the country; but this they preposterously accompanied with a present of such value, as proved a fresh inducement to remain there.

“ Meanwhile the Spaniards were not without solicitude, or a variety of sentiments, in deliberating concerning their own future conduct. From what they had already seen, many of them formed such extravagant ideas concerning the opulence of the country, that, despising danger or hardships, when they had in view treasures which appeared to be inexhaustible, they were eager to attempt the conquest. Others, estimating the power of the Mexican empire by its wealth, and enumerating the various proofs which had occurred of its being

under a well regulated administration, contended, that it would be an act of the wildest frenzy to attack such a state with a small body of men, in want of provisions; unconnected with any ally, and already enfeebled by the diseases peculiar to the climate, and the loss of several of their number. Cortez secretly applauded the advocates for bold measures, and cherished their romantic ideas," &c. &c. &c.

ROBERTSON'S HISTORY OF AMERICA, Book V.

Vol. II. Page 269. *Octavo Edition.*

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56

MONTEZUMA.

B

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MONTEZUMA.

ZOBAYA.

CAZZIVA.

ROBILDA.

FERNANDO CORTEZ.

SEBASTIAN.

MANUEL.

ALVARADO.

FELIX.

MORA.

Mexicans, Spaniards, &c. &c.

Scene—*Mexico.*

MONTEZUMA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Banks of the Lake of Mexico—three Ships at anchor :
the City in the Distance.*

Enter MANUEL, FELIX, and ALVARADO.

MANUEL.

Dead, say you?

FELIX.

Dead.

ALVARADO.

When was it?

MANUEL.

Prithee, tell us.

FELIX.

Just now.

ALVARADO.

And where?

FELIX.

In the great temple.

MANUEL.

Jove !

FELIX.

I saw it: he expired on the spot.

ALVARADO.

And did you nothing ?

FELIX.

Pshaw ! would you have done

More than I did, and died for a revenge ?

ALVARADO.

Why, was there any tumult ?

FELIX.

When the savage
Struck down our comrade, all the people shouted,
And rush'd into the streets, and call'd aloud
For Spanish blood : I hid behind a pillar
Until the sanctuary was made empty
Of all but me ; and then I slunk away.

MANUEL.

Which man among them all stood forth and did it ?

FELIX.

The heir of Mexico.

MANUEL.

The prince Zobaya ?

ALVARADO.

I'll swear it was no other.

FELIX.

He lifted down the huge cross from the pedestal,

And rushing to our countryman, who placed it
There, where a deformed idol stood before,
He kill'd him with a blow.

MANUEL.

Inhuman dog !

ALVARADO.

Then we are at their mercy.

MANUEL.

Even so :

For it is plain they 're bolder than ourselves ;
At best it is a dread equality
Of rashness.

FELIX.

We have the worse cause as well.

ALVARADO.

That is the best on't.

FELIX.

How, good sir ?

ALVARADO.

We want

As much as will create despair in us :
Cool valour will do nothing.

MANUEL.

Against men

Who fight for all they love and live for : we
Can only lose a ducat in possession,
And hope of more to be wrung out of them :
True, Alvarado.

FELIX.

Would I were at home !

ALVARADO.

I would you were, Don Felix ; by the saints,
You can laugh at a jest, but not encounter
Pale Hazard with a frown, great as her own,
When she talks to you, with her finger thus.

FELIX.

Confess we cannot live more than a week,
If not preserved to satisfy the gods
Of Mexico, when they want men for food :
They 'll roast us : here we stand : how we came hither
I cannot recollect : they thought us deities :
(To ALVARADO.) Thou dost not look like one : now if
we tread
An inch of ground we 've pass'd, they 'll mess upon
us.

ALVARADO.

For peril's sake I am in love with peril :
I would I might contend with this Zobaya.

MANUEL.

He is the confidant of Montezuma.

FELIX.

His kinsman too.

MANUEL.

He would have cut us short
Upon our march.

FELIX.

He counsell'd them to shut
The gates of Mexico against us : how
They hate us ! It is said about the camp
The passionate king has suffer'd us so far,

And lock'd us in the city to make sure
His vengeance.

ALVARADO.

Fool ! There's refuge at the last.

[*Pointing to the Ships.*

FELIX.

Ay, we may starve there.

MANUEL.

Nay, it was well done
To cheat the wary king ; to feast his sight
With wonders, useful to ourselves alone :
It is an evident authority
To awe the city, and afford us shelter.

FELIX.

True, for a day.

ALVARADO.

By Heav'n, if they alarm us
We will on board, and from the cannon's mouth
Pour such a storm, shall make the pavements crack,
And yawn to catch the towers that grow upon them.
Who's this ?

FELIX.

Dost thou not know him since a woman
Has made him a philosopher ?

ALVARADO.

He's pale.

FELIX.

He would fain pass by us. Speak to him,
Manuel : he's your friend.

ALVARADO.

Is he in love?

FELIX.

Most constantly.

Enter SEBASTIAN.

MANUEL.

Pshaw! silence!—a good day.

FELIX.

May't please you, recollect us, Don Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN.

Ha! My friend! Felix! Alvarado!

There is my hand.

FELIX.

A melancholy greeting.

A plague on thy philosophy!—A girl
Of Mexico has made thee what thou could'st
Not make thyself.

SEBASTIAN.

Ha! what's that, Don Felix?

FELIX

Serious.

SEBASTIAN.

Nay you traduce me.

FELIX.

So I don't, by Heaven!

Thou wert a libertine as free as light,
As gay as the wild wind where flowers grow,
As rash and sudden as the flick'ring blaze

That kills in sport, as changeful as the minutes,
As idle as the drowsy winter morn.
What but a monk or woman could so change thee ?
Thou sleepest, and by night, which thou didst never ;
Thou go'st abroad by day into the woods
And think'st the while : Sebastian is no more !
Thine instincts now run slow, like rivers—ay,
Cold love, like death, has touch'd thee.

SEBASTIAN.

Cold ?

Oh you mistake !

FELIX.

I prithee tell us.

SEBASTIAN.

Fire

And frenzy are not hot like love.

FELIX.

Thou'rt lost ;

Thou hast no wit but morals ; mere philosophy
Hath made thee mad : such is the end of wisdom.

MANUEL.

It ne'er will be thy end from such a cause.

FELIX.

Now, who's for sport ? if thou wouldst wear to shreds
Thy melancholy, come with us.

ALVARADO.

Ay, come.

SEBASTIAN.

Excuse me if I may not : fare ye well :
I had a word—no matter : will you go ? [To MANUEL.

MANUEL.

I dare not: no—to-night—to-morrow, Felix—
I'm sick to-day: I shall but spoil your mirth.

FELIX.

Love's dang'rous. I am gone.

ALVARADO.

Perhaps to-night—

MANUEL.

Ay, we shall meet.

FELIX.

Let us not tarry longer.

ALVARADO.

Farewell.

MANUEL.

We'll meet to-night.

[*Exeunt FELIX and ALVARADO.*

SEBASTIAN.

Well, let them go: I am not in the humour
To traffic with them for a word or two.
Does she not love me? tell me that, I pray thee.

MANUEL.

Ay, as a princess loves a pretty page,
Or he a golden bracelet; something handsome
That suits his person or his liking.

SEBASTIAN.

Softly,—

Why does she bid me never fail a day
To visit her? or why solicit me
With costly presents? why so constantly
Follow me when the hunters are abroad,

And woo me from the chase, and linger with me,
Stilling the forest birds with her sweet voice ?
Oh ! by my life she does it without art,
In the full view of gaping Mexicans ;
And all the while her bright eye, like the eagle's,
Looks admiration in the face.

MANUEL.

There dwells an argument against her love :
I know she is most confident, and shrinks not
At smiles and scrutinies.
A love-sick girl is not so unreserved :
The sightless earth, which cannot return glances,
Has more and steadier attraction to
The coy maid, than the wilder'd summer gnat
Finds in a torch ; *her eye is like a book*
The heart has written in.
When did she ever of her own accord
Weep for a cause she could not tell you of ?
When did she ever falter in her speech ?
When did she blush ?

SEBASTIAN.

Oh never !—Shame does that.

MANUEL

Well ? (I speak plainly) do you doubt the king,
Her father, and the kingdom, would not deem her
Shamed, if they saw, or thought they saw, she gave
Herself to you ? I'm sorry to say this,
Because you droop : lovers must hear the truth,
All those, at least, who like yourself search for it :
It saves a world of pain and disappointment.

SEBASTIAN.

It wrongs us of an universe of bliss ;
It tears hope from us like a limb o' the heart,
And leaves us bleeding.

MANUEL.

She is never sad,
And yet she is to marry with Zobaya,
Soon, or we hear the tale imperfectly :
Does she not say sometimes, how glad she would be
To live a virgin ?

SEBASTIAN (*despondingly*).

No.

MANUEL.

You make me smile—
Meaning she'd rather wed with any other
Than with the prince.

SEBASTIAN.

You see I'm in despair.

MANUEL.

But have you ever told her of your love ?

SEBASTIAN.

How could I dare ?

MANUEL.

Do it, and presently :

If you offend her, why adventure more
Than courteous phrases : come, we'll talk of it ;
When do you visit her ?

SEBASTIAN.

At noon.

MANUEL.

, Let's waste
An hour in the city.

SEBASTIAN.

As you please.

[*Exeunt SEBASTIAN and MANUEL.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Mexican Palace.

Enter MONTEZUMA, followed by CAZZIVA.

MONTEZUMA.

What'er ye be, ye unseen instruments,
That, in obscure and terrible succession,
Usurp the dark supremacy of my soul,
Ye shall have full submission, since to strive
Is vain: now light the lamp in this dim world,
And manifest yourselves: my shadowy thoughts,
Be unto me more palpable and present,
And busy, for ye will—but mute, like vengeance.

CAZZIVA.

My lord!

MONTEZUMA.

Now, priest, why do you track my footsteps?
Be still, ye ministers of passionate hatred,
Justice ye shall have, we'll all have justice!
If you have any thing to ask, speak on,
And quick; I am impatient.

CAZZIVA.

Another time, my prince.

MONTEZUMA.

Thou rev'rend man,

I have a little power, not much ; what would'st thou ?

CAZZIVA.

I am not come to sue.

MONTEZUMA.

That's well, that's well ;

I have a bountiful heart, sir, but no means.

CAZZIVA.

My tidings will await your leisure.

MONTEZUMA.

Tidings !

Hear mine first : how you look ! as if you knew it not—

High Priest, as if you knew not all the shame.

The general voice is big with.

CAZZIVA.

What is this ?

MONTEZUMA.

Other men have their will ; their palms are loose,

Supple, and strong ; mine have a mountain on 'em :

I cannot wield my sceptre for the load,

Nor lift to pray—I cannot, by the sun !

Feel you no weight upon your hands ? No strong

Impediment ?

CAZZIVA.

None.

MONTEZUMA.

Is it possible ?

Go, go : yet I have tidings ; stay and hear them :
Our clear cerulean lake, so gallantly
Crown'd with the foliage of thick plantain-groves,
Tall shining poplars, fragrant cedar-trees,
Its grave assembly of star-crested rocks,
Its alabaster domes of silvery light,
Serene pavilions, sunny palaces,
And triple isles, begirt with battlements,
That show like armed children of the deep,
Are all insulted, scorn'd, and trodden down !
These strangers have no feeling with us, man ;
Our peaceful wave is fretted with their arts,
FURROW'D BY CHARIOTS THAT YOKE THE WIND,
AND SCATTER FOAM, LIKE DUST. How think you now ?
Are not *these* tidings ?

CAZZIVA.

Have I leave to speak ?

MONTEZUMA.

You have : there 's something written on the waste
Of thy cold visage : give it breath. (*Seats himself.*)
Now, sir ;
But I have deep intents, so be not prolix.

CAZZIVA.

Do you remember when the Spaniard
First landed on our coasts, he did despatch
A messenger of peace to Montezuma ?

MONTEZUMA.

HE CAME, and I was then enthroned, and sat,
Monarch-like, with ten thousand warriors circling me,
Me and my beautiful Mora : why, thou priest,

Conjure the memory of that fatal day?
 I would have met the invader in his path,
 Darken'd with venom'd shafts the light of Heav'n,
 And hurl'd a wilderness of rocks and crags
 In thunder down the mountain precipice:
Thou cam'st betwixt me and my purpose, old Caz-
 ziva !

*Sages and prophets struck the sword of victory
 From mighty hands :—dost thou repent thee this?*

CAZZIVA.

Yet not to us alone ; the princess Mora—

MONTEZUMA.

True : well, no more of that.

CAZZIVA.

She pleaded for them,
 And for *one* chiefly ; and she bade thee mark,
 As I believe, his aspect, and declared
 'T was vain to think, so gentle as he seem'd,—
 And you remember that ?

MONTEZUMA.

You see I do :

Of course : what then ? I have not time for this :—
 On, sir.

CAZZIVA.

Know you the person of that stranger ?

MONTEZUMA.

*I know his race :—proceed—haply I've heard
 My daughter call him brave : and what of this ?*

CAZZIVA.

You are not ignorant how oft they met ?

MONTEZUMA.

MET?

CAZZIVA.

Very frequently: 'tis known and talk'd of:
I'm bold to say it.

MONTEZUMA.

Shall I kill him? this is well: very well, sir:
Where heard'st thou this? Now thou shalt perish: is 't not
False? swear it and be great: is she a traitor?
Who doth declare it, sir? *who ddres?* Oh death!

CAZZIVA.

Forgive me this.

MONTEZUMA.

She leagued against me! *she!*
Hear thou, my slave,—speak to the point,—quick!
quick!
Disgorge the blistering venom of thy tale,
Before the utter frenzy of my soul
Urge me to curse thee, ay, thee, and thy priesthood.

CAZZIVA.

It is my duty.

MONTEZUMA.

What, to blight me thus?
Old man, thou hast undone me, pierced me through
And through: I cannot shake it off: it clings
Fast to me: I shall bear it to my grave:
'Tis here, and here!

CAZZIVA.

My gracious lord, you're ill.

MONTEZUMA.

To death, sir; very cold and aching: ah!
I feel as it were useless or impossible
To live beyond this hour: tell me all:
Whisper it—softly: I shall die for shame:
Am I a wretch? Is 't true that she has sold us?

CAZZIVA.

Nay, for the proof—

MONTEZUMA.

We're quite alone! is 't true?

CAZZIVA.

There is a soldier in the Spanish troop—
I've spoken with him: he hath boasted to me,
The princess and—I pray you, pardon me.

MONTEZUMA.

Go on; I'm greedy for it.

CAZZIVA.

And Sebastian—

MONTEZUMA.

Is that his name?

CAZZIVA.

My liege, he is the man
Of whom we spake just now.

MONTEZUMA.

That's clear: proceed.

CAZZIVA.

After much questioning, I learn'd the princess
And this young Spaniard held most frequent converse;
And, (or my villain lied) he vaunted this:
Believe it might be so; for who can bask

Beneath the sunshine of a princess' favors,
And wish to hide his greatness from the world?

MONTEZUMA.

Oh, no more!

CAZZIVA.

Could I approve your trusts, and keep this from you?

MONTEZUMA.

Ye broad plague-breathing—no, I'll not—priest, crown
me—

But with no earthly perishable crown.
Plant light, life durable upon my head—
Something eternal—I have heard it all,
And borne it—am not shatter'd, but still breathe
To execute some great and awful—
Ye naked chasms of voracious earth,
Swallow them! Oh, my brain! I'LL SWEAR SHE'S PURE.

CAZZIVA.

Emperor, might I advise—

MONTEZUMA.

Anon: I'll root them up;—
These men—I'll crush them—turn them quite to dust:
To-morrow—I'll destroy them, and for *her*!—

CAZZIVA.

Please you to hear me.

MONTEZUMA.

Ay, sir, your advice.

CAZZIVA.

The princess is betroth'd, my sovereign lord,
Unto Zobaya of the imperial family;
The time is apt to consummate—

MONTEZUMA.

It is :

That is well thought of. Priest, give orders ;
Publish it straight : I'll have them join'd to-morrow,
To-night, this day.

CAZZIVA.

To-morrow it were better.

MONTEZUMA.

So : well, to-morrow be it, ere the dawn.
Hark you, priest, let no word be whisper'd, none
Touching the emperor's might, his majesty,
His race, his blood, HIGH BLOOD—priest, I *forgive* her.

CAZZIVA.

Who shall prevent these Spaniards ?

MONTEZUMA.

I'll bid them to a feast, and poison them :
Some will escape ; they shall be scorch'd with flame
At night : I'll burn them up—Oh ! I'll be busy—
I have bethought me of a way to kill.

Cazziva !

CAZZIVA.

I am here.

MONTEZUMA.

We'll sacrifice

Unto the gods to-morrow : at the dead
Of night we'll fire their haunt, and slaughter them :
Send to Zobaya ; let my child come hither :
No ; bid her remain, and stay my coming.
Go, priest, proclaim in Mexico, I stir,
Am full of joy, will wear my crown to-morrow ;—

PROPHET Cazziva !

Are there no portents in the stars? Retire,
And read the page: and mark, I *will* have wonders!
Make prophecy of glorious things to be;
Command them in the temples, and the streets,
To think, with closed lips, a prayer for freedom,
Freedom, and victory, and Montezuma!

[*Exeunt separately.*

ACT II.—SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Mexican Palace—Mora, reclining on a Couch, and a Female Attendant.

MORA.

My pretty Zuma ! such a robe as that
The sober earth wears after summer : I
Will lay my hand upon my heart to warm it
When I wrap 'round those garments : come to me.
What a sweet maid thou art ! Oh, thou shalt wed
The boy who bore the wine-cup yesternight,
And got a rare bird's pinion from his lord
To crown his clust'ring hair. How beautiful
Thy tresses are ! and what an arm is here !
Go, go : I cannot bear thy beauty ;
I will not sit beside thee : fie upon thee,
To shame me ! Nay, no words : I like thy voice,
But will not hear it now. Ah, gentle Zuma !
Forsake me for a while ; at dusky eve
Remind me, I must put on that cold dress.

[Exit Attendant.

A timid girl ! I hope he will not come ;
It is full noon : I will go seek him then ;
He shall not die : whom then shall I betray ?
My father ? What shall I become at last ?

Enter SEBASTIAN.

SEBASTIAN.

Soft ! she is there, alone—
Magnificence is fond of solitude ;
For where the multitude of men is not,
Eternal nature, on her mountain throne,
Reigns over giant rocks and precipices :
Diamonds and yellow gold lie silently
Couch'd in the lap of earth, pearls, white as truth,
Hide in a bed of waters, and we're told,
How fairer nymphs than ever stole a charm
Of light or colour from the day, have dwelt
In coral cells, or graced the noiseless woods,
And loved the emerald spot by quiet fountains.
She sleeps, or is as tranquil ; if I sigh,
'Twill spoil the picture of her rest : she stirs,
And looks like monumental form,
Choicest of beautiful things inanimate,
Putting on life.

MORA.

Who's there ? Come, sit by me, Sebastian ;
I have things to tell you : oh, it grieves me much
To say, for they are cruel things, and have,
Ere now, cost me some tears.

SEBASTIAN.

Nay, this is fanciful.

MORA.

You know, I never weep for wantonness,
Nor sigh at noon-tide hours to chill young hopes

And pleasures. Do I love to mar the beauty
 Of the rich world, and shadow forms the sun
 Makes gay and golden ?

SEBASTIAN.

Princess, how you sigh !

What is your will ?

MORA.

That you return no more
 To visit me : that you await no more
 To mark my coming where of late I came
 From golden palaces to hear you talk :
 Oh, what a void is all the fertile world
 If it must be ! And I *will* have it so.

SEBASTIAN.

What mean you now ? Whence is this cruel thought ?
 Why did you warn me of a thousand perils ?
 Oh, like a tyrant, to destroy at leisure.

MORA.

Destroy !

SEBASTIAN.

Did I say so ?

MORA.

Do you reproach me for it ?

SEBASTIAN.

No : I love thee,
 Most dearly love thee for thy charities.

MORA.

Be silent : now you pain me.
 The air is hot, and the strong beams that dart
 Into this chamber bring a weariness ;

My father has been with me ;
Yet I am sad as men are without hope.

SEBASTIAN.

What said your father ?

MORA.

THIS, my Sebastian : there's a foul reproach
Gone throughout Mexico : the blood, HIGH BLOOD
Of Montezuma is corrupted, canker'd
In the eyes of all the world ; and I, and thou,
Have done this.

SEBASTIAN.

Ha !

MORA.

They rumour that I tell thee
The secrets of our nation, of our councils,
And when we climb the purple hills together,
Or tread the orange groves, or roam the plains,
Gardens, and forests, that we league against them :
Has it been thus ?

SEBASTIAN.

False ! False !

MORA.

How could I think it was a sin to deem you
Generous and brave ; in kindness and in pity
To teach you how to know the lion's print
Along the tribeful wilderness ; how to make
The golden-feather'd eagle quit her home,
And bathe her wings in the supernal day-stream ;
To snare the fleet and delicate antelope ;
To tame the mountain-dog and hunt the cougar ;

How to distinguish birds of precious dyes ;
 And above all to shun the glossy charm
 Of pois'nois fruits ?—
 How could I think but this was innocent ?

SEBASTIAN.

No more, my princess.

MORA.

It is an injury to call me traitor——
 Turn not my thoughtst that way *at such a moment.*

SEBASTIAN.

Why swells her colourless and beautiful bosom
 As it would break ?

MORA.

To-morrow I shall wed.

SEBASTIAN.

To-morrow !

MORA.

Why not ? To-morrow : let that pass.

SEBASTIAN.

Oh, death ! How stern she is ! To-morrow !

MORA.

You know I was betroth'd, and should not tremble
 To hear that I must wed.

SEBASTIAN.

What a cold heart
 She has then if she loves not ! Is 't a dream ?

MORA.

No : I have pray'd still at the sabbath hour
 Of evening, to stand opposite the sun,
 Coil'd like a sparkling serpent on the lake,

Mid all his cresting clouds and flashing hues,
Then listen with wild joy to hear you say,
He never set so bravely in Castile:—
But I must wed, and never see you more,
And never hear your voice.

SEBASTIAN.

How pale and very beautiful she is !
Wed? Be it: if she do, I'll have her still ;
Honour and life are atoms to her worth.

MORA.

They say—my heart will burst—if it be true,
If I adore thee, and thy land, and race,
And cling unto thy fortunes, oh! so passionately
As they do charge me: what a foolish fault
To let them spill blood, like my blood, as dear:
It were not natural that I should let thee
Perish, if I so love thee.

SEBASTIAN.

She burns, and from her eyes, like weeping suns,
Hot passion-drops distil: *there is some cause*—

MORA.

Horror! They shall *not* do this deed.

SEBASTIAN.

What deed?

MORA.

GODS OF MY FATHERS! 'Tis an awful thing
To tell: instruct me by some noise mysterious,
Or sight remarkable, to do no wrong.

SEBASTIAN.

Shadows, like prophecies, float dimly by;
I cannot grasp them: ha! there's treachery

Such as before—and she is privy to it.

MORA.

Hist ! hist ! a footstep ! none may see thee here ;
At the still hour to-night, I am appointed
Alone to watch, and with a virgin hand
Feed the pure, ever-burning, consecrated
Lights in the temple : *it is our religion* :
Some one comes—Oh ! *that's a horrid thought !*

SEBASTIAN.

What is a horrid thought ?

MORA.

No, no, you must not ;
'Tis death in Mexico to suffer it.

SEBASTIAN.

In mercy, what ?

MORA.

Hark ! 'Tis my father's voice !
Oh, I must save you—join me in the temple :
You must depart to-night from Mexico.

SEBASTIAN.

Oh, wherefore ? And thyself—

MORA.

What should *I* do ?

SEBASTIAN.

Alas ! she's very proud, and loves me not,
Else we might fly.

MORA.

To-night without the temple you shall meet
An officer ; obey and follow him :
Hence ! for my father's step is at the door.
Well then—I am afraid to meet my father !

SEBASTIAN.

(*Apart.*) Now what were best? I'll think on 't: (*To her.*)
My protecting——

MORA.

If you but whisper this——

SEBASTIAN.

Wait, while I swear.

MORA.

Begone, sir.

SEBASTIAN.

I' the temple? [Exit SEBASTIAN.

MORA.

I have said, the temple.

Enter CAZZIVA.

Ha! the temple!

MORA.

Ye, who see me and my soul, forgive me! [Exit.

Enter MONTEZUMA and ZOBAYA.

ZOBAYA (*to MONTEZUMA, who is gazing after MORA.*)
Another day will pass; a brief submission.

MONTEZUMA.

Some hideous spectre, dancing in the light,
Puts forth a blinding hand upon me, thus.

CAZZIVA (*aside to MONTEZUMA.*)

You beheld the princess?

MONTEZUMA.

Say, with whom?

CAZZIVA.

I think, Sebastian.

MONTEZUMA.

Madness! Priest, begone—

We would be private,—yet a word: be mute,
MUTE AS HER CRIME; you understand; if she
Can show the white day such an act, 'tis monstrous.
Leave us now.

CAZZIVA.

(*Apart.*) What did she say to him?

[*Exit.*]

MONTEZUMA.

And they have trampled on us;
Yet we have proudly smiled and suffer'd it;
And they have drain'd our mines of gold and silver;
Wrung, unpermitted, from the voiceless earth
A mount of gems, and worn them in our presence;
And they have raised the tone of insolence
In royal palaces, and holy temples;
We bore this too, were passive: Oh, but *now*—

ZOBAYA.

Emperor! I have no words; this catalogue
Of mighty wrongs—I am ashamed to speak:—
We'll have atonement.

MONTEZUMA.

More, much more,

By the hot God of battle, I'll have VENGEANCE.—
Saw you the princess?

ZOBAYA.

Not since noon.

MONTEZUMA.

Indeed !

So :—that's well : I had fears : your hand, Zobaya !
Is this an honest hand ?

ZOBAYA.

Else pierce it through,
And give the mounting blood back to the Sun,
Who fill'd my sire's, and Montezuma's veins,
With the same glorious current.

MONTEZUMA.

Well, I'll make thee
Quite mine own : know that at to-morrow's dawn
We solemnize the rites.

ZOBAYA.

Thou hast said it :
I love my country and the princess ; let
Thy daughter's peace bespeak my gratitude.

MONTEZUMA (*not heeding him*).

Authority ! whose front was terrible,
Has gone by like a vision : where's my strength ?
Are there no cleansing fires in the dense air
To scour away this horrible pollution ?

ZOBAYA.

Be patient, my great lord and father.

MONTUZEMA.

Zobaya ! I've been patient, very patient ;
But, sir, my nature's hot, my bosom yearns
To shake concealment, like a viper, off :
It preys upon me, eats my living heart.

ZOBAYA.

Alas ! these starts of desperate passion——

MONTEZUMA.

Are these men poison-proof, that I must bear it ?

Or I a common man ?

ZOBAYA.

No second sun

Shall look upon our shame.

MONTEZUMA.

'T is well remember'd :

I will bear up against these mighty wrongs.

[Speaking low, and gradually relapsing into passion.
Our holy altars' snow-robed purity
Made black and tainted by hot-breathed pollution :
And now our temples' deities hurl'd down——
Ha ! you avenged that—you did—you said it—
Did you not say so ?

ZOBAYA.

High and mighty Emperor !

MONTEZUMA.

Did you not say a Spanish officer

Had cast our idols to the earth ?

ZOBAYA.

E'en so.

MONTEZUMA.

Did you not seize the villain by the throat,
And strangle him ?

ZOBAYA.

No : with the iron cross I fell'd the slave,
And dash'd his brains out.

MONTEZUMA.

Noble sir, I thank thee—
I breathe more freely :—Ay, a patriot blow.

ZOBAYA.

'Twas a rash blow ; 't will rouse them from their sleep :
They had died dreaming else.

MONTEZUMA.

Make preparation.
Shall we not burn them at the dead of night ?
I dote upon thy valour, my Zobaya :
Go, and the name of Country strengthen thee !

ZOBAYA.

Trust me, thy godlike vengeance shall be writ
In golden syllables.

MONTEZUMA.

And thou shalt live,
Zobaya, there.

ZOBAYA.

Thy instrument and Heav'n's ! [Exit.

MONTEZUMA.

My hopes are young again : the sun looks out ;
The round world jocund laughs ; and, by my soul,
My earliest memory cannot trace a day
More burning or more beautiful than this :

[Enter CORTEZ.]

It suits my humour excellently well,
For I am hot and lively. Ha ! who's there ?
I' th' Gods' name, Spaniard ! what brings thee hither ?

CORTEZ.

My duty to my king.

MONTEZUMA.

Were you commanded by your king to break
Unbidden on my privacy ?

CORTEZ.

Unbidden ?

MONTEZUMA.

Unbidden and unwish'd for : hear you not ?
Your king ! Sir, in whose presence stand you now ?
My sceptre has grown out of use, that's plain ;
But I am yet an emperor, or call'd so.

CORTEZ.

I'm pleased to hear you say it ; I have need
Of your authority.

MONTEZUMA.

Well sir, go on.

CORTEZ.

A Spanish officer of note hath been
Cruelly butcher'd by a Mexican :—
I come to claim the murderer at your hands.

MONTEZUMA.

Where was this death committed ?

CORTEZ.

IN YOUR KINGDOM.

MONTEZUMA.

Oh Earth !

CORTEZ.

In European climes, my lord,
There is a law divine, immutable,
Graved on the imperishable scroll of ages,

Stamp'd on the life and on the heart of man—
Blood will have blood !

MONTEZUMA.

I know not what you say :
Unbridled insolence ! that he should dare——

CORTEZ.

Am I to understand you do decree
The murderer to death ?

MONTEZUMA.

Castilian ! whom ?

CORTEZ.

My lord, as I have heard, a nobleman,
One, more's the pity, of imperial stock ;
His name, Zobaya.

MONTEZUMA.

So, and heard'st thou why
He slew thy countryman ?

CORTEZ.

No cause, nor consequence,
Can sanctify the deed of murder.

MONTEZUMA.

Hast heard for why he slew thy countryman ?

CORTEZ.

I scarcely know ; I may, or I may not.

MONTEZUMA.

Then listen to me :—

In Spain you worship Heaven, as we do here ;
You have your temples there, as we have here :
Your actions do light honour to your faith,
And so 'tis trifling this ; yet answer me ;

If, in thy city, one from Mexico,
Should tread with sacrilegious insolence
God's own peculiar residence, making sport
Of all that Christians worship and admire;
If this man should stamp upon your relics,
Raise the right arm of violence, and *there*,
There, where your holiest memories are enshrined,
There, point the finger of derision, **MORE**,
Drag the illustrious image from its base,
And spit and trample on it—tell me, sir,
What should a Christian do? [CORTEZ *appears confounded*.

He cannot, *dare* not speak it. Now, i' th' name
Of all that either of us loves and honours,
Why should a Christian perpetrate those deeds
Abroad, he'd brook not in his native Europe
A Mexican should emulate? **FIE ON'T! FIE ON'T!**

CORTEZ.

This is not to the purpose.

MONTEZUMA.

Get thee hence!

CORTEZ.

King, ere I leave thee, I must bear thy signet;
The assassin must be given up.

MONTEZUMA.

God grant I don't go mad in this man's sight!
He must! Nay if he *must*—
(Goes to the side, and with a loud voice) Bear back those
golden wedges to the treasury,
Remember ye! No more such offerings

To the Castilian quarters: (*to CORTEZ*) like you that?
Back with your rich and slavish freight! (*returns.*) Oh,
must!

There was a Montezuma, such a voice
Should startle from his century of sleep,
As if the battle-drum had thunder'd o'er him
Its last, loud, solemn, dread, eternal beat!

CORTEZ.

Emperor of Mexico! I stand before you
The representative of Charles the Fifth——

MONTEZUMA.

Well, sir, away!

CORTEZ.

I will not be insulted.

MONTEZUMA.

Blow it about, ye opposite winds of heaven!
He talks of insult! Sir, what brought thee hither?
What detains thee here?

CORTEZ.

You know I come from the rich shores of Spain,
Ambassador.

MONTEZUMA.

Indeed, ambassador,

Thou 'rt well companion'd, and sans question, sir,
Your hireling crew of riotous followers
All come ambassadors. May I inquire
Is it for peace ye make so long a journey?

CORTEZ.

For peace or war, I am indifferent.

MONTEZUMA.

Or does your royal master want our gold

To scatter armed delegates abroad,
 And sow dissension in blood-thirsty Europe ?
 To insinuate falsehood with the blush of truth,
 Make treachery seem beautiful as faith,
 Heap the vain pile of festering deceit,
 Till the huge monument invade the skies ?

CORTEZ.

Blood has been shed in Mexico :
 And I and justice claim the murderer.

MONTEZUMA.

What ? Thou wouldst have him in thy grasp to kill :
 Blood will have blood : you say that is your creed—
 Thou brand'st him, murderer : be it as thou say'st :
 He has a talisman to shake *thee* dead.

CORTEZ.

What is this thunderbolt ?

MONTEZUMA.

MY PROTECTION.

CORTEZ.

King, dost thou screen this man ?

MONTEZUMA.

Avoid my sight !

Hence from my palace ! Hark you, quit my kingdom,
 If you are not enamour'd of your fate ;
 For you will meet with *such adventures* here——
 Think ere too late upon my words : again !
 Know yourself better when you talk to kings,
 And mend your manners—manners—manners ! (Exit
 MONTEZUMA).

CORTEZ.

Why then the game is up, and I have come

Over the seas to dig myself a grave.
Is this the vaunted issue of my enterprise?
I might have found as much at home, and spared
The scorn that waits to cling to my defeat.
But I have reckon'd Fortune's countenance
Shall smile on me for ever: why on me
More than on Montezuma? She has shown
Herself my lover; 'tis for me to drive
The hesitating maid to her own granting.
It is in chances such as these the soul
Takes wing, and rises undismay'd, above
The assault of earthquakes. My ambition!
Let me consider this: if we permit
His rage to gain a point, we are undone.
He should be grasp'd, and we embrace his power;
He should be caged. Flattery will not do it:—
I do not think him brave: it shall be tried.
Our valour, not our force, must take him captive,
With swarming nations round him: so to-night
I'll ply my friends; make their hearts grow with wine,
And strike my spur into them: I have err'd;
My bolts fall impotent upon his head;
To be secure, THE TITAN MUST BE CHAIN'D. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The Interior of the Temple.—Night.

Enter MORA and SEBASTIAN.

MORA.

Hark !

SEBASTIAN.

Still.

MORA.

The demon of the night's abroad
Upon his startling wing : hist !

SEBASTIAN.

What a soul
Thy father has, to fashion this damn'd slaughter !

MORA.

These billets——take them——will preserve you, sir,
In your fast travel, as I said before :
And so—farewell !

[Retires.]

SEBASTIAN.

Farewell !——Ye crowned columns,
Ye breathing arches, ye stupendous images,
Which bear this dome upon ye, like a world ;
Air, full of heavy night, which I respire
Hardly ; thou spirit, whatsoe'er thou art,
And where, whose name is based upon this fabric,
Burst over and about me, choke, confound me,
If I forsake my gallant friends, and fly
For melancholy life—no, not to wear

The thorny flower of this woman's beauty
Next to my heart for ever: I'll *not* do it.

MORA.

What say you, sir? Begone!

SEBASTIAN.

Now I'll be doing till I bend or break
Her mighty spirit: I'll tell all to Cortez;
And so she'll hate me; well, what hope have I
To win her if she love me, she's so proud?

(*In a loud tone.*) Farewell!

MORA.

Oh thus, in anger? You'll betray me.

SEBASTIAN.

Betray you?

MORA.

Yes; a thousand walls and roofs
Speak when thou dost: Oh God! you will betray me.
If one should hear—have you the heart, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN.

Her single prayer in pain stabs like an arrow—
Princess, I will not breathe:—how quiet 'tis!

MORA.

You are soon calm; 'tis good to be so kindly
Temper'd—we will not think of it: but now—
Hush! heard you not an echo?

SEBASTIAN.

Jealous creatures
Are tenants near: at times a desolate bird
Screams at the gushing wind; and shy and swifter
Things than the light sweep by me, and are gone.

MORA.

You may delay a moment. Can it be,
 That I shall not behold you, gallant Spaniard,
 After this hour? Not once more to the end
 Of hours, when all are told? I never will
 Forget you, yet 'twere sweet to have a gift,
 Something which *was* Sebastian's, to look
 Upon, when it is *mine*, and never lose
 The freshness of my thoughts.

SEBASTIAN.

Imperial
 Daughter of Montezuma, my own——

MORA.

Well!

SEBASTIAN.

Mora! how good you are! Oh you have been
 More liberal than the stars, the winds, the flowers;
 What under heaven is mine and precious, that
 You gave me not? How can I offer you——

MORA.

You mock me, sir; if I should choose, you must
 Part with that glittering amulet at your breast:
 Is it of worth? You'll not refuse me, say.

SEBASTIAN.

This cross?

MORA.

If you are grateful, give it me;
 I'll have it always, like a charm, about me;
 It is not much to ask, or does not seem so;
 I cannot know your thoughts; perhaps, 'tis dear

For some sweet cause: well then, I will not *rob* you.
I never sought of you before, and not again
Shall I seek any thing (*A bell chimes*). Now comes the
morn.

SEBASTIAN.

'Tis pealing in the clouds: the sensible air
Doth catch and carry on the warning through
The waste paths where the winds ride. No one hears:
Light and life are not quicken'd; there is none
Awake, but only WE and TIME.

MORA.

Go then;

Leave me to watch; you will be gay, and should,
For you are young, and brave, and beautiful;
Grief does not sit well on a youthful face:
You will be happy, and for the long woes
That taint the freshness of another's cheek
And prey on other hearts, you will not heed them.
Methinks I now could weep, and lay me down
For ever on this marble: I am sad
To-night.

SEBASTIAN.

This bauble—I had forgotten it—
I have look'd here for memory, and seen
Things long past, as they were, and wept.

MORA.

Why so?

SEBASTIAN.

This toy shone once upon as soft a bosom,
Under a brow as beautiful, and near

As kind a heart, as that it shall sleep by
Henceforth. [He places it on her neck.

MORA.

For ever.

SEBASTIAN.

The daughter of a noble family,
A fair and blue-eyed girl, born a Castilian,
Loved to set forth upon her polish'd neck
That simple ornament: she was my sister :
One only, very young, and—oh ! her hair
Was like the sunbeams, and her voice voluptuous
Then was so *very* sweet you could not bear
To listen while she spoke——Tears ! for a criminal !
One erring like an angel—she is gone—
Forgiv'n now—I cannot talk of this—
She sold herself to misery and shame,
And lived, as wretches do, in fierce enjoyment,
In the hot course of desperate delight,
And died, as *such* must die, in shrieking agony.

MORA.

Oh, do not say *so!* would that she had lived !
I could have loved your sister: I will wear
This for her sake—and *yours*: how much I pity her !

SEBASTIAN.

She is beyond, below thy pity now ;
Dust, which wert beauty ! What art thou but dust ?
And yet that all men worship, women envy,
Is cursed and wither'd down to thee !

MORA.

Sad thought !

Enter CAZZIVA.

CAZZIVA.

I heard a murmur, as of voices muttering
Long and low; where's the princess? If it be—
Then 'twould rain blood: it were a sin 'gainst Heaven:
Something stirs: look! Oh Sun! It is—it is!—

MORA.

Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN.

Beauteous Mora!

MORA.

You'll forget
There was one gentle throughout all Mexico,
Who for your sake betray'd the councils—hark!

CAZZIVA.

Traitor!

MORA.

Was that a step?

SEBASTIAN.

The envious night
That will not suffer one last hopeless glance
Of thy chaste beauty, mocks the startled sense
With sounds and shadows in the rustling air:
'Tis nothing.'

MORA.

Let us hence: I am sick with dread.

SEBASTIAN.

Nay, stand thus: you are like the shuddering poplar,
And the white gems that hang upon your garments

Shine through the night, and quiver like the leaves,
Which tremble and turn pale when the wind sighs—
'Tis just so, and you smile.

MORA.

Smile ! Can you think it ? Now——

SEBASTIAN.

I am prepared.

MORA.

Follow me to the porch, my true Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN (*aside*).

I'll straight unto Fernando, that were best ;
Best to disclose her father's perfidy :
If any ill betide—what ill ?—Her hatred—
But I'll not peril her ; and when 'tis past,
It is a virtue, she'll not scorn me for it.

MORA.

I am quite faint with fear. Come, if you love me.

SEBASTIAN.

Love you ?

MORA.

Do you not love me ? Is your steed
Ready and fleet ? Out of the storm-cloud's bosom
The gale doth sob : it is as dark as death.

SEBASTIAN.

I come. [*As they are going, CAZZIVA advances.*

CAZZIVA.

Halt ! traitress ! Slave ! Awake ye ! miscreants !

SEBASTIAN.

Damnation !

CAZZIVA.

Monsters ! blots on earth ! both ! viper !
Seducer ! ye shall die ! Awake ! ho ! sacrilege !

SEBASTIAN.

Bé still—dumb—or I'll strangle thee !

CAZZIVA.

Off ! help !

SEBASTIAN.

Devil or spy ! phantom or form ! have at thee !

[*Stabs him.*

CAZZIVA.

Ruffian ! help ! blood !

[*Dies.*

MORA.

Spare—pity—mercy—mercy !

[*She staggers against the Scene, which opens, and discovers the consecrated Lights.—The Stage becomes illuminated ; Mora has sunk senseless at the Foot of the Altar. Sebastian is standing over the Body of the Priest, whom he recognises.*

SEBASTIAN.

HIGH PRIEST ! CAZZIVA !

[*The Curtain falls.*

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A Room in the Spanish Quarters—Day-break.

CORTEZ, SEBASTIAN, MANUEL, ALVARADO, FELIX, and
others, at Table, drinking.

CORTEZ.

Hush !

ALVARADO.

SONG.

1.

Did you ever see the white rose blow?
Did you ever see it wither?
If you ever mark'd it well, you know
It blooms not two days together.

2.

And if the rains beat roughly down,
And the strong winds clamour, ever
When this rose doth live, its charms are gone,
And it wakes from its ruin never.

3.

So fair as thou art, fallen shalt thou be,
And this dream of life departed—
Thy night shall be dark, and, like the rose-tree,
Storms may make thee broken-hearted.

4.

I would I could woo thee from thy still shade,
Ere thy bright brief existence is over,
To bloom in the world, ere thy gay blossoms fade,
And pass thy two days with thy lover.

CORTEZ.

Excellent, Alvarado ; by the mass,
I like your song, and yet 'tis melancholy :
How strange that it should please !
There's something, now, stronger than science here :
What think you, Felix ?

FELIX.

Oh, not me, Signor ; I've no taste for ballads.

CORTEZ.

Psha ! I pass you by : hast heard it, you ?

FIRST SPANIARD.

There's music in it.

CORTEZ.

Nay, not music only ;
Memory, sir : there's some one here can tell.

ALVARADO (*aside to CORTEZ*).

Go to, go to, Fernando : tax them not,
Else we shall hear.

CORTEZ.

St. Jago !

MANUEL.

Ha ! I have it :

Now, Felix.

FELIX.

I am for you.

MANUEL.

Prithee, captain ;—

'Twas a rare ditty,—thank you for it, sir—

FELIX.

Oh, an approved one.

MANUEL.

Ay, a crimson girl

Warbled it richly at Vittoria,

One season, in the opera.

CORTEZ.

Was it thus ?—

Drink, sirs, drink.

FELIX.

I'll give you that warm beauty.

CORTEZ.

Whom ?

FELIX.

Donna Julia.

MANUEL.

The coquet actress :

They call'd her so.

FELIX.

With reason ; for I knew

A brace of cavaliers who thinn'd for love of her ;
 And when she slighted both, or jilted them,
 They fell to tilting for their flesh and spirits :
 One got a thrust, and so he changed his mind,
 And t' other took advice, and dipp'd i' th' sea.

SECOND SPANIARD.

He was the wiser.

MANUEL.

Let's have done with it.

ALVARADO.

Oh not for me.

CORTEZ.

Nor me: but look! the night
Dies in the Indian east, and the pale stars
Go out, like glow-worms: fill, my gallant comrades,
High, till the amber torrent overflow
Your crowned goblets; meet the laughing Hours
With sumptuous bowls, and from the wave magnificent
Baptize the infant day, and call him Happiness.

ALL.

Huzza!

[They drink.]

CORTEZ.

I love to see the vehemence of joy
Kindle a tempest in the eye: my soul,
What a clime is this! The yellow sun
Has sipp'd the wine that sparkles in this cup,
And left his light behind. I pledge ye, sirs:
But how, Sebastian drinks not.

ALVARADO.

Faith! he does not.

CORTEZ.

Now this wo'n't go: he has not graced our banquet
Two hours.

ALVARADO.

Ay, thereabouts.

FELIX.

By Jupiter !

He did not toast the dark girl of Vittoria :
 Signor, a word in your ear. [Whispers SEBASTIAN.
Was't so?

SEBASTIAN.

I know not.

MANUEL.

No more : 'tis not fair
 To rate him thus : ye have not noted him ;
 I'll wager he has drunk more deep than any man.

FIRST SPANIARD.

'Tis so, indeed.

CORTEZ.

He has been busy then.

MANUEL.

Mind him not ; 'tis his humour : he is merry
 With the best, ay, and racier in his mirth,
 Take one day with another.

CORTEZ.

I believe you.

See, what a pleasant beam steals o'er the cups !
 The diamond glance of an arch maiden's eye
 Is not more penetrating : ha ! how feel ye ?—
 Charge anew ! Do not your pulses beat
 Quick time beneath this soul-inspiring lustre ?
 Do ye not breathe a spirit with the morn,
 That warms, like BLOOD, and bids ye on to something ?

(Enter OFFICER.)

How now ?

OFFICER.

My lord, a servant of the emperor
Waits in the court.

CORTEZ.

Indeed ! Admit him.

[*Exit OFFICER.*

FELIX.

Resolve me, Manuel, if this Mexican
Be up betimes, or have not slept to-night.

MANUEL.

Look in his eye.

CORTEZ.

Now what is this ?

Enter ROBILDA.

Well, Mexican.

ROBILDA.

Montezuma
Sends greeting to the Spanish general, and
In friendship thus acquaints him, with the hour
The princess of this land becomes a bride,
And weds a warrior in the capital.
The emperor bids Fernando to the temple,
And proffers welcome to his chosen friends.

SEBASTIAN (*starting up suddenly*).
Does he send for me—for me—for me ?

CORTEZ.

Be seated, sir : s'death ! Sebastian, sit.
Say that we come upon the instant ; and——
You have your answer. [*Exit ROBILDA.*
Give me a bowl of wine. (*Drinks.*) By God, we'll do it.

(Rises.) Have I not loved ye? Which of you has found me
 Impatient, proud, false, or forgetful ever?
 Now, if there be a breathing man among you,
 That has come here to shame me and my king—
 I know not any—witness all I hate him,
 And cast him, like this empty goblet, from me.

MANUEL.

Speak plain, Fernando Cortez.

ALVARADO.

To the point.

FELIX.

Which is th' ungrateful one?

SEBASTIAN.

By Heav'n, himself!

CORTEZ.

Hear me out. Once in Cholula—’tis idle
 This—ye have not forgotten it—and how,
 By chance, we learn'd what rank hypocrisies
 Suggest the vacant smoothness of a Mexican.
 We are resourceless in a mighty empire,
 Embarrass'd in a stirring multitude
 Made up of millions, struggling out of wonder,
 And measuring us now with equal looks:
 Nay, they have crush'd to death a gallant Spaniard,
 And with a dangerous spirit shield the murderer.
 The charm of immortality forsakes us;
 And, crowding in the streets, they glare upon us
 By night at every turn, like wet-lipp'd tigers,
 Pleased with the insufficient feast of human blood.

FELIX.

Damn them!

MANUEL.

What, dare they screen the savage?

ALVARADO.

Tear him, the blood-hound, from his master's bosom,
And at the temple-gates hew him in pieces !

CORTEZ.

That 's a brave thought ; it were an everlasting one
To seize——*not* on the murderer.

MANUEL and ALVARADO.

On whom ?

CORTEZ.

MONTEZUMA.

FIRST SPANIARD.

That were too much.

SEBASTIAN.

Too much ? for thee : I swear
To do it with Fernando Cortez : perish,
If ye fail us ! Transport him hither ;
Let him reign *here*, and bring his court amongst us,
And we will watch him *with a lover's eye*.
Haste, and you mar the triumph of the slayer,
And snatch his gory hand before it reach
The shrinking pure one of the Mexican girl.

FIRST SPANIARD.

How can we take the king against his will ?

SEBASTIAN.

Can you not put a chain upon the tyrant ?
Or wind your fingers in his ebon hair,
And drag him hither ? Are ye turn'd to stone ?
I 've got the spell to make ye, monuments,

Start into frantic life : to-night—to-night—
 Ye stand betwixt the universal poles,
 The far extremities of earth and heaven,
 Directly in the passage of the thunder-bolt.

CORTEZ.

Sebastian !

SEBASTIAN.

Montezuma, in his wrath
 And deep imaginings, has fix'd at midnight,
 The blind and taleless midnight, to destroy ye
 Utterly—to make desolate with flame
 These halls—to root ye up, and fling abroad
 The pestilential dust of hated Spaniards.

CORTEZ.

Break up the feast.

MANUEL.

Sebastian, is this real ?

SEBASTIAN.

Manuel, I swear.

CORTEZ.

Who follows to the temple ?

SPANIARDS.

All, all !

CORTEZ.

Be desperate :—rivet Montezuma ;
 And we, not he, are king of Mexico. (*Exeunt: manent*
SEBASTIAN and MANUEL.)

SEBASTIAN.

Manuel ! Have you heard ? Not any thing
 To-night ? What hour is it ? Already morning ?

'Tis vain : the dreaming world yet knows it not :
But *when*—did it appear I was long absent ?

MANUEL.

Some did think so.

SEBASTIAN.

What could I do but slay him ?

MANUEL.

This marriage is most sudden.

SEBASTIAN.

Take these gloves.

Christ ! They are bloody : off ! (*Throws them away.*)

MANUEL.

What have you done ?

SEBASTIAN.

Kill'd him outright.

MANUEL.

Whom ?

SEBASTIAN.

An idolater.

MANUEL.

How was it ?

SEBASTIAN.

In the dark : he stood beside us,
Listening, caught every whisper, then o' th' sudden
He shouted in the temple : in my passion
I grasp'd him by his loose and shining robes,
And smote him with my dagger.

MANUEL.

But the princess——

SEBASTIAN.

She sunk down : light broke on us : then I saw
Cazziva dead.

MANUEL.

Was 't HE ?

SEBASTIAN.

To avoid suspicion

Visiting the princess, I removed the body
Near to a distant altar ; wandering thence
Through dark and mazy aisles, I trod a path
Unknown, and came at last without the portals.

[*Spanish trumpet sounds.*

Hark ! Now for this venture.

MANUEL.

Will you go ?

Dare you confront the princess ?

SEBASTIAN.

Certainly :

How can *she* talk ? There's no one may accuse :
More wine ! (*drinks*) we can prevent the marriage :
The emperor is an Argus in his palace :
Confusion to him ! (*drinks*) Ha ! *I dropp'd the poniard!*

MANUEL.

Let us begone.

SEBASTIAN.

That was amiss ; no matter :
Come on, my friend ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Temple.

*Chorus of Priests, during which MONTEZUMA, ZOBAYA,
and MORA, enter from the interior.*

I.

Oh thou most capital, insphered Star !
Which now art coming in thy lucid car,
Blending thy deep dies with harmonious strife,
That from thy throne of day
Dost chase all harm away ;
Thou, that careerest high, irradiate with life,
Smile on the bridegroom and the bride,
In their white nuptial pride,
Smile downward in thy loveliness,
Our covenant to bless.

II.

God ! o'er thy clime so beautiful and bright
Pause thou, and plume thy wing of parent light,
And weep not at thy childrens' shame and sloth ;
Honour the dire delay,
Before another day
Whole hecatombs of tyrants shall appease thy wrath ;
For we will make to-night at length
A witness of our strength ;
The bridal torch shall shew the slave
His victory, or his grave !

MONTEZUMA.

I bless thee, Mora : good-dispensing angels,
 That slumber when the world is full of crime,
 Attend my prayer, and bless ye both, my children :
 From thy first dawn of beauty I have watch'd
 My child, as steadfastly as captive men
 Gaze after hours of the beauteous day :—
 I weep, but 'tis with joy ; embrace, my son !
 She is the ornament and truth of loveliness,
 Thou art the soul and person of true valour.
 I bless ye both.

ZOBAYA.

My fair and gentle bride !
 My royal father ! Teach me to bestow
 The peace and glory you have made me full of :
 Sweet princess, you are pale.

MORA.

Imagine I have said all she might say
 At such a time, who weds, and denies not :
 But now—I cannot speak.

MONTEZUMA.

My gallant child,
 How faint you are !

MORA.

I feel so giddy that——
 But it will soon depart : indeed, *you see I smile.*

MONTEZUMA.

Dearest, compose thyself : prince, has the message
 Which I have sent the Spaniard had an answer ?

ZOBAYA.

He will be here anon.

MONTEZUMA.

A word with thee:

BEAUTIFUL MORA !

(MONTEZUMA and ZOBAYA retire up the stage.)

MORA (placing her hand upon her breast.)

It must be here :

They are not by : what can this sinking mean ?

I feel as I were dying away like wax.

Surely it cannot be : kind God ! let it

Not be : it is, and I am bleeding : and

So presently shall die. Murderer ! come forth !

(Draws a dagger from beneath her vest.)

Oh ! if that horrible death had never chanced !

Why did the assassin leave this reeking witness

Upon the floating pavements, which did seem

Sinking with it and me : how lost I was !

And lest the jealous king should see it there,

And think—I dare not say—I know not what ;

I clasp'd it in the madness of that minute ;

And thou hast cut my heart, and loosed my blood.

Having kill'd one already, would'st have more prey ?

Why did I nestle thee ? Although it weeps

Red tears, 'tis but a scratch which I will stanch.

(She sees them returning, and replaces the
dagger in her bosom.)

Ha ! To your sheath : but scar my flesh no deeper :

Be still, or kill me ; that I will endure.

[They come forward.]

ZOBAYA.

What, and revile and taunt them ! Think, my liege,
 (This were moot sport) on our intent to-night,
 And calm this spirit.

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis balsam to my soul
 To bid them here when all the rites are done,
 And laugh at them :— [A noise within.]

What voice was that ?

Horribly shrill ! and hark ! what uproar !

[A priest rushes in.]

PRIEST.

Horror ! Oh horror ! High avenging Heaven !

MONTEZUMA.

What now ? He shrinks from a frail, flitting dream
 Of shapes, and huge conceptions : lift him up.

PRIEST.

I see him now, a ghastly murder'd man.

ZOBAYA.

Stand off, ye ; tell us boldly what affrights thee.

PRIEST.

As even now I wander'd the bright pavements,
 Talking my prayers unto the dizzy galleries,
 I set my foot against a bloody stone,
 And fell upon a corse, a lukewarm corse.

PRIESTS.

Most horrible !

ZOBAYA.

What more ?

PRIEST.

I saw his face,
And knew him well, the Patriarch Cazziva.

PRIESTS.

Save us ! Oh sacrilege !

ZOBAYA.

Where was it ? Speak

PRIEST.

Yonder—there—there !

ZOBAYA.

Shew me : it is your fever.

PRIEST.

I saw him with these eyes.

ZOBAYA.

Dead ?

PRIEST.

At the heart.

ZOBAYA.

Lead me : what, stabb'd with swords ?

PRIEST.

Ay, through and through.

[*Exeunt ZOBAYA, PRIEST, and others.*

MONTEZUMA.

Cazziva butcher'd !

MORA.

It can never be.

MONTEZUMA.

Perhaps not : who should do it ? Every star
Would see and tell of it : there's no security,

For every mute engender'd thing in nature
Would have a tongue and say, There stalks the mur-
derer !

MORA.

That's true.

MONTEZUMA.

At staring noon and sable midnight
The hollow voice would speak him, murderer !
In desert worlds and populous solitudes,
The uttering air would spread it like a plague ;
Or from yon hallow'd outraged temple roof,
The herald-sheeted lightnings would come down,
And, flapping their blue wings along the shrines,
Scorch up the murderer, like a sapless reed.

MORA.

I feel I'm sinking : mercy !

MONTEZUMA.

MORA !

MORA.

By the creating omnipresent Sun,
It was not I !

MONTEZUMA.

Thou !

MORA.

What a silly thought !

You know—you know it was not.

MONTEZUMA.

Dead ! *He* dead !

Murder'd ! that is, *removed*—by whom ? for what ?
I pray you put your hand from off my garment—

'Tis wearying, love: dead! who did watch them so—
Ha! and *if*—Out! The peering day downright
Laughs me to scorn: look up, my bright-hair'd child!
My rose of empire! my own high-born, pure,
And delicate Mora! All the visible world
Can never match my one empyreal girl.
Now do not tremble: I will have a blush
Lie on that cheek, like innocence: how sleeping
Cold thy hand is, and very, very pale,
Like a dead hand: why is this? Kiss me, love.

MORA.

My father!

[As she goes to embrace him, her scarf falls aside,
and discovers to MONTEZUMA blood upon her
robe: perceiving his eyes fixed upon her
bosom, she shrinks back dismayed, and covers
it with her hand.

MONTEZUMA.

What is there?

MORA (*dreadfully agitated.*)

Where?

MONTEZUMA.

Of what colour is your bosom's vest?

MORA.

White.

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis as crimson as mine own.

MORA.

Ah, no.

F 2

MONTEZUMA.

It is as crimson as a bleeding heart,—
It stains your hand:—’tis blood.

MORA.

Then ’tis my blood.

MONTEZUMA.

Oh my sweet child!

MORA.

Mine, mine indeed it is—

Because I’m weak: the adder thing has stung me:

[*Brings forth the poniard, and throws it to the ground.*

There, that is all: I nursed the iron reptile
Like a babe: with its sharp and shining tooth
The worm has hurt me—so I bleed—

MONTEZUMA (*regarding the dagger.*)

Lie there!

Thou put’st mine eyes upon the stretch: monster!
I will approach thee: so,—what are thy uses?
Hast thou a principle? Fix’d, voiceless burthen
Upon the floor I tread; whence are thy terrors?

MORA.

Bury it,—give it me.

MONTEZUMA.

Who stirs? Who talks?

I know thee now, red-spotted leprosy!
Death’s ensigns are upon thee. Crocodil,
Weep out thy bloody tears: they shock me:
All thy desires, temptations, policies,

Substantial aliment, is blood, men's blood :
My eye-balls crack to look upon its point.
Whence hadst thou it to cherish, meek-eyed girl !

MORA.

I found it, sir.

MONTEZUMA.

And hid it, like a treasure :
Oh, charity ! That thou could'st snatch, and wrap
From the world's obloquy a tool so infamous !
Look up !

MORA.

You see——

MONTEZUMA.

I see—but dare not think
On that I see : I will have answer : now
Keep thine eye watch on the blue floor of Heav'n :
Where lay that weapon ? when didst thou behold it ?
Why didst thou lock it fast against thy flesh,
And mix thy blood to that perchance it reek'd with
When first thou hadst it ? Quick ! thou coin'st some tale.

MORA.

I 've said the truth.

MONTEZUMA.

Thou hast not spoken, fool.

MORA.

It was that same—you torture me—that slew him—
Close to the altar : *that* is sure.

MONTEZUMA.

Enough.

MORA.

I spoke no word : I said not that : I 'm mad :
I know not how, why, where,—it is most true
I found it.

MONTEZUMA.

Thou art damn'd ! Come, let us hence :
What a lone, mark'd, forlorn, wrung slave am I !
(Rudely to MORA.) Stand by,—be stirring ye ! Let
my train on : [Tumult without.
Who have ye ? Insolents ! I had forgot :
So : I must welcome them : I 'm in the tone :
Rejoice, rejoice, my soul ! Let loose the night,
Ye sure slow-wheeling hours ! I see the pyre :
I hear the busy crackling flames—rejoice !
Yet I will play with them before I kill.

*Enter CORTEZ, SEBASTIAN, MANUEL, FELIX, and
ALVARADO.*

CORTEZ.

My lord, we greet your highness.

MONTEZUMA.

Sir, I thank ye.

CORTEZ.

Your highness' bidding, and our great respect,
Have brought us hither.

MONTEZUMA.

There 's no make-game here
To occupy the restlessness of scorn.
You may retrace your steps.

SEBASTIAN (*to MANUEL, seeing MORA.*)

Look you.

MANUEL.

She's melancholy.

SEBASTIAN.

I'll speak to her.

MANUEL.

Not for the world.

SEBASTIAN.

You know not

How much I love her !

CORTEZ.

Now when we received

Your gracious summons, king, we thought 't was so
Express'd—the marriage-form stood still for us.

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis all complete : I had no other purpose
Than to unclasp the girdle of my hate,
Which hath restrain'd me night and day for long :
I've sported with ye : thus it is : behold,
The bride ! (*approaching SEBASTIAN.*) And you, who
stand apart, as one
Of separate ends, unlike these smooth marauders,
Bent on a higher privilege than gold,
Anticipating some superior gain,
Some choice wreck out of the ocean of our griefs,
You have been highly favour'd, sir, amongst us,—
This is the married maid of Mexico.

SEBASTIAN.

Manuel, your arm.

MORA.

Oh ! cruel, cruel.

CORTEZ.

Capricious man, give ear ; 'tis I must speak.

[MONTEZUMA, *in extreme passion, stamps violently and traverses the stage.*

MORA.

Why are you here, Sebastian ?

What have you done to keep us both from perishing ?

Have you betray'd me, or do you mean to die ?

CORTEZ.

I am not to be cow'd by bursts of temper :

I will be heard.

MONTEZUMA.

MOUNTAINOUS EARTH ! You shall not :
Sir, as I please. Daughter, get hence ! (*To CORTEZ.*)

You see

The girl is timid : now shall you or I

Be humorsome and absolute in sooth ?

CORTEZ.

'Tis come to that.

MONTEZUMA.

Beware how far you tempt me.

CORTEZ.

It weighs not with me ; I've consider'd it.—

Will you give audience ?

MONTEZUMA.

To a renegade ?

CORTEZ.

Monarch, my blood is hot.

MONTEZUMA.

MINE is the LIGHTNING!

SEBASTIAN.

Where have ye hid the slave that fell'd our countryman?

MONTEZUMA.

I'll crush thee! slave?

SEBASTIAN.

Assassin! dog! and slave!

MONTEZUMA (*with agony.*)

Oh!

SEBASTIAN.

We have come to tear him limb from limb,
If fires can search him out, or swords can rend—
We'll have his heart.

MONTEZUMA.

I will not talk with thee.

SEBASTIAN.

Thou darest not talk with me, nor one of us.
We know thy trusts; a heavy curse is on them:
To-night—Night could not shut down in her casket
The secret, and we not know it:—ay, start—
Thou would'st have scathed us in the dead of night.

MORA.

I dream!

CORTEZ.

We know it all; thou seest we know it:—
All thy demoniac hopes are ravelling fast—
I blow them to the morning winds, like down.

SEBASTIAN.

Hear'st thou that? Tell me, stand'st thou in amaze,
Or terror, or remorse, or hopelessness?

Oh shame, that ever man below the fortune,
 Which settles upon some particular head
 The pearl of unaccountable dominion,
 Should have such righteous cause
 To wrest from kings their perilous prerogative,
 And trumpet in the ears of majesty,
Thou art a traitor!

MONTEZUMA.

Go on.

CORTEZ.

Montezuma !

Now by my sword, there is no faith between us.

MONTEZUMA.

I do not reckon there was ever.

CORTEZ.

I

Thought so. I should have known thy method better :
 Once I was taught, that was in Cholula :
 Twice I am taught, and this in Mexico :
 I am accomplish'd now. Have you no thought
 How you may expiate (there's no offence)
 How you may still be king, or less, or nothing ?

MONTEZUMA.

I have to learn all that.

CORTEZ.

'Tis thus : remove—(you understand some measure,
 Some palpable security, is needful :
 Likely it may not please,—but who's in fault ?)
 Remove your seat of government, your officers,
 And every circumstance of kingly power,
 Yourself, and uses of authority,

Away from that ancestral fort, wherein
You practise and defend your treacheries.

MONTEZUMA.

I am attentive.

CORTEZ.

Well :—you have assign'd us
Castles in Mexico, broad and together.
Display the imperial standard on their towers ;
Command, and be obey'd. We are your servants.

SEBASTIAN.

I will go search the aisles to find Zobaya,
And drag him forth, and slay him in the daylight.

MANUEL.

Ay, let us do it.

MORA.

Stay ! Ye have no hearts.

MONTEZUMA.

A moment—patience ! Good, my lords, Castilians,—
Oh, ye consummate cheats ! perfectest villains !
Spoilers ! blood-lappers ! executioners !
My soul doth toil and tire with ye, things !
I'm weary at the sound of my own voice,
Wherewith I tell ye I am *sick* of ye.
Touch not my kinsman's life, and so an end—
Lay down the law.

CORTEZ.

Comply upon the instant :
Come with us straight, we will not hurt the prince.

MONTEZUMA.

What, shall I dwindle down to this ? Henceforth
I have no glory of a king, save only

A pale reflection from illustrious deeds,
Done yesterday, which have outlived me, though
I live. I'll not go with ye.

SEBASTIAN.

Bear ye this?

He trifles with us: seize him instantly,
Or stab him to the heart.

MORA.

Off!

What desp'rate thought has arm'd thee with a naked
Sword? Strike—thou art so fond of blood—me first!
I have deserved to die since yesterday,
So strike at both together, and but once!

SEBASTIAN.

I would thou wert my mistress!

MORA.

My dear father!

MONTEZUMA.

Thou art of all my plagues the blistering one.
Out of my reach! If he do come back soon,
They 'll shed his blood: I 'll sign my shame before.

[*Advances solemnly to CORTEZ.*

Into thy hands I do commit myself:
If thou play false, my wrong be on thy children;
Order the rest: the pain of this is gone.

CORTEZ.

Please you to follow us.

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis very well.

[*Exeunt CORTEZ, FELIX, and ALVARADO,
with MONTEZUMA.*

SEBASTIAN.

I feel a painful joy; a quickening sense
Of mirth; a bounding of the heart; a spirit
In my blood: would that I were busy!

MANUEL.

Why do you stay? To gaze upon her thus?
You look as you could dare—if so, 'twere easy.

SEBASTIAN (*eagerly.*)

What? I do think it were:
(*Grasps the hand of MORA.*) BRIDE! (To MANUEL.) Did
you ever
See such a beauty?

MORA.

Hence!

MANUEL.

Force her away.

SEBASTIAN.

There is no other hope: I will, by Heaven!

MORA.

What wouldest thou? Calmly—now I fear thee: mercy!

SEBASTIAN.

Away! away!

MORA.

You will not kill me—will you?

Spare me! I will forgive ye all: oh, whither?—
Help ye!

SEBASTIAN.

Advance a pace, thou robed priest,
I'll scatter thee, like ashes.

MORA.

Let me kneel:

What must I do? I will not struggle with ye—
Ye *dare* not hurt me—loose me—I will follow—
Help! Merciful God! Is there none?

[*They drag her across the Stage. Enter ZOBAYA and Mexicans: by a sudden effort she releases herself from SEBASTIAN, and rushes into the arms of ZOBAYA.*

My husband, save me! Oh, for this I love thee!

[*The Priests and others gather around them: the Spaniards remain fixed and in disappointment. The Curtain drops.*

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

MONTEZUMA's *Residence in the Spanish Quarters.*

Enter SEBASTIAN and MANUEL.

MANUEL.

But will you hear me ?

SEBASTIAN.

No : I'm desperate.

MANUEL.

You are already in the king's apartment ;

Do pause.

SEBASTIAN.

I tell thee, Manuel, I hate
And love this girl to death : nothing is left
But this—I'll claim her as my wife.

MANUEL.

And then——

SEBASTIAN.

Well ! What should he do then, but trample on her ?
And when the spirit's wounded, mine she will be
In spite, or love. If I were moderate now,
I could afford such admirable argument—
But I am wild with my own certainty.

MANUEL.

If he should doubt——

SEBASTIAN.

Oh, he suspects too much :
 I'll turn a heathen, if he'll give her to me :
Doubt ! Friend, I'll quarrel with thee for that word.
 I tell thee 'tis an excellent plan ; he'll credit it ;
 And so, in consequence, will drive the princess
 Into these arms by his own cruelty.
 Wouldst have me crouch before th' insulting maid
 That's won my heart, and now has wed another ?
Wed !—If my scheme end in her death or madness,
Before this night—I care not : by the *Virgin*,
 I feel she shall be mine, *or*—

MANUEL.

Here's the king :
 I cannot hope for the success I wish you.

[*Exit MANUEL.*

Enter MONTEZUMA.

Methought, sir, I was free to think, to sleep :
 I'd be alone.

SEBASTIAN.

My lord—

MONTEZUMA.

I'll spare the rest : thy captain sent thee.

SEBASTIAN.

It were best to hear me.

MONTEZUMA.

A noble gentleman ! Doth he will that I
 Concede some trifling matter to his hands ?
 Teach me what further benefit he contemplates.

SEBASTIAN.

You 've misconceived.

MONTEZUMA.

What is 't?

SEBASTIAN.

I 'll not delay;

You shall know all: I want my right—your daughter—

MONTEZUMA.

Hold, sir! (*Aside.*) Big heart, if ever, now be still!

Down! Let each separate fibre be all sense,

That I may learn about her treacheries.

(*To him.*) There is an usage here the men of Mexico
Treat with a strict observance; in discourse
Of Gods, and kings like Gods (I mention it
Lest you should err), when they do talk upon
The titled family of Montezuma,
They syllable all names religiously:—
You may proceed.

SEBASTIAN.

Be patient while I speak then.

MONTEZUMA.

How! doth he stipulate?—Just as it likes me.

SEBASTIAN.

Say you will hear me out; promise me that.

MONTEZUMA.

Reptile! thou hast wound me in thy slimy toil.
What, if thy words drop more malignant juice
Than lurks within the teeth of serpent creatures;
What, if thy talk be hissing like a snake,
And every breath thou vomit'st be a pest,

How can I choose but hear thee? Well thou know'st
Were I as yesterday—

SEBASTIAN.

The princess Mora.

MONTEZUMA.

Again? the princess Mora! What of her?

SEBASTIAN.

Sire! she should have denied to marry now.

MONTEZUMA.

Denied! her sovereign and country, and
Her father? Should a child deny her father?
Go on; I'm curious to learn.

SEBASTIAN.

The princess
Had not the choice to wed. I see thee shrink;
How can I keep the secret and have justice?
Because—because already wedded.

MONTEZUMA (*meditating.*)

I cannot think: he must be mad.

SEBASTIAN.

I pray you—

MONTEZUMA.

Abhorred slanderer! Do I not see
This is the coinage of thy quenchless hate?
Blacker than aconite—thou heed'st not that,
So it be bitter.

SEBASTIAN.

Thou may'st trust to it.

MONTEZUMA.

Could such disgraceful faith inhabit here,

These nails should, like a poniard, rip my breast :
Thou lie ! to tamper thus. Whom in this world
But one should Mora marry ?

SEBASTIAN.

Would you see him ?

MONTEZUMA.

Why ay, could this thing be, which never might,
Give him unto me, and my look shall kill,
Like a sharp knife, so she were free again ;
Free as all think—and I—tell me, where is he ?

SEBASTIAN.

HERE !

MONTEZUMA.

Ah ! [He stands appalled.]

SEBASTIAN.

A virgin child ! A pagan ! and a Mexican !
But now my wife ! my faith ! my king ! my country !
Awake ! to do me right : he is entranced :
This must breed excellent hate.

MONTEZUMA (*in a low tone.*)

His wife ! it is impossible.

SEBASTIAN.

What dost thou read with such irregular glance ?
Canst thou perceive thy destiny in the winds ?

MONTEZUMA.

The air which I respire must surely be
The same that's coffin'd up in sepulchres
With dead men, fathers, and young children,
Rotting together under monumental marble,
'Tis so foul : I can't breathe enough for life ;

I do not feel as if I had a heart,
But cold as rock. Did you say any thing?

SEBASTIAN.

Not now, my lord.

MONTEZUMA.

Would I were dead, indeed!

Ye multitudinous, invisible fiends,
Which never wrought in all your torturings
So monstrous and unnatural a truth,
Until this hour, to damn your victim with ;
Will ye not kill me quite ?—In mercy do it ;
My heart won't break.

SEBASTIAN.

Am I to have my wife ?

MONTEZUMA.

I'll think upon it : the truth of this were fiercest.
Where were her father's gods ? Oh, worst impiety !
What place ? What hour ? What means ? What sanc-
tuary ?

SEBASTIAN.

By the light of the last moon, that is now
Gone out of heaven ; at the midnight hour ;
A holy Catholic priest ; and mine she is—
Mine, by the Christian's tie.

MONTEZUMA.

The Christian's tie ?

What may that be ?

SEBASTIAN.

Thy daughter is a Christian.
Smile not, nor shake thy head, for this is fast

Reality ; nothing like dreams is like it.
She has forsown thine altars, spurn'd thy faith,
And, disenthralld from heathenish pollution,
She boasts the holiest ensign at her bosom,
And weeps and prays o'er such a thing as this.

[*Produces a Cross.*

MONTEZUMA.

Am I alive ? What is 't ?—A cross, I see—
Have ye not set it up and bid us worship ?
Oh, but we bore not that ; *bethink yourself!*
(*Apart.*) He tells me true, and if true, then—what then ?
I view, as from on high, this linked ruin.
Who hath betray'd our councils ? Who hath marr'd
The retribution ? Who hath leagued to stab
Cazziva, at the altar, dead ? Why, who
Watch'd last night in the temple ? I know more,
Much more than he hath told me, or 'twere politic
He should :—*I'm stung*, and cannot live long time !

SEBASTIAN.

This will suffice : he's much affected by it.
I will not now press further on your highness.

MONTEZUMA (*not heeding him.*)

The dagger in her bosom ! Let me die
If she prove not a murdereress and a harlot.
Oh ! I could weep for her : weep, hypocrite !
I hate her worse than sin.
Vengeance is in the storm, and in the earthquake ;
And mounts upon the white waves, and cries out ;
And, wrapp'd in robes of lightning, comes abroad
With winds from highest heaven. But infidelity,

Incest, and massacre, and, worst, last curse !
 Filial ingratitude, stir up men's minds
 To task the righteous minister.

Enter ROBILDA.

Well, what ?
 Pay no respect, but to the point ; who sent thee ?

ROBILDA.

My lord, the princess Mora.

MONTEZUMA.

Ha ! THE CHRISTIAN MORA ? So, what says the traitress ?

ROBILDA.

More than she said she look'd.

MONTEZUMA.

What look'd she then ?
 I care not what : speak quick—I want to *answer*,
 Not to hear thee.

ROBILDA.

She said, I know not wherefore,
 Some shun, some point at me : I 'm miserable ;
 I have no refuge 'gainst this cruel scorn :
 He whom they *call* my husband frowns upon me.
 Say to my father, I will come and clasp
 My arms around his neck ; say, I will kiss
 His feet ; and ask his blessing ere I grieve
 To death.

MONTEZUMA.

This is all ?

ROBILDA.

All.

MONTEZUMA.

I charge thee, slave,
Report my words : this scorpion—no, I mean
The princess—shame seal up her lips for ever,
So she may shape no breath to lies again !
Omnipotence above the clouds,
Parch up the freshness of young life within her !
Thou quick'ning and eternal Sun ! my prayer
Is, that thou gather thy remotest beams,
Minutest fires, and atoms of thine element,
Into thy firm imperishable orb
Of active light ; then strike into her eye-balls
The power of thy glory like hot arrows,
And blind her for the measure of her life
To come ! I know—I know—words are but breath ;
I know my curse shall cling, *and cling* unto her
Like Fear to Valour. Get thee hence ; I will
That none hold converse with the princess : publish it.

ROBILDA.

If I do tell her this 'twill surely kill her.

MONTEZUMA.

Bring me that news ; tell me that she is dead,
I 'll give thee, man, a crown of gold to wear ;
I 'll clothe thee in such garments as no eye
Shall bear to look upon. Who merits death,
If not the Spaniard's wife ? Who merits death,
If not the smooth betrayer of her country ?
Who merits death, if not the Christian Mora ?

ROBILDA.

Is she all these ?

MONTEZUMA.

Have I not spoken, sir,
And imprecated vengeance for this cause?
Begone! No words! Hie thee unto the princess,
And say, my curse is on her, and about her.

[*Exit ROBILDA.*

My curse! upon my child?—one beautiful child?
Am I a man—a father? No; a rightful judge,
Commission'd by my gods to punish crime.
Specious life! full of woes—how welcome
To lose thee! perhaps soon; yet I'll not leave
A monument of my disgrace all public
Upon the earth, and in the city—no; then how?

[*He retires up the Stage absorbed in thought.*

SEBASTIAN.

There's no more to be done 'twixt thee and me.
I leave thee thus, to seek the princess; spurn'd
As she is, she cannot fail to welcome me.
But, prosper me in this, my wakeful spirit,
And all to come of life shall be reproachless,
When hopes are crown'd which keep me still a villain!

[*Exit SEBASTIAN.*

MONTEZUMA,

My brain swims round, and in this reel of thought
Nature's first instincts struggle into form,
Shape after shape, eclipsing one another;
It is the mind's dim midnight,
And long sepulchred images are about,
Like echoes of what have been, to be again.
How tranquil all things are! no movement shocks me;

Confused atoms, silent substances,
By nature ever still, are stiller now.
Tranquillity, thou pale-eyed consequence—
Of *what?* It is the deed I meditate :
I will become a part of the most infinite air,
Or else subside into—who waits upon me ?
What living man may tell ?

Enter SLAVE.

SLAVE.

Did you not call, my lord ?

MONTEZUMA.

I did ; approach,
And let us whisper : hither comes lord Cortez.

Enter CORTEZ.

Presently we will talk. [*To the Slave, who withdraws.*
(To CORTEZ.) You honor me ; I did not think the
proud

Fernando would have visited so soon
This my poor dwelling : will you sit ?

CORTEZ.

Although no strong necessity commanded
That I obtrude thus early on your presence——

MONTEZUMA.

Yet you had come (I do beseech your pardon),
Out of the love you bear me. Sir, for this
In all things I am bound to act your pleasure.

CORTEZ.

It pleases me

To see you calm, my lord, and temperate :
 I do desire a most dispassionate ear
 To my discourse. Shall I proceed ?

MONTEZUMA.

Immediately :

I have been school'd for rashness, and have learn'd
 At this late hour to better my behaviour.
 What would you say ?

CORTEZ.

My cares and policies
 Embrace your interests as mine own : I trust
 You 'll grant me that.

MONTEZUMA.

Sir, I 'm convinced of it.

CORTEZ.

Then, emperor, in a word, the unforgotten
 Unexpiated slaughter of my countryman,
 Doth move his friends to murmur at their chief ;
 And further, the neglect of chastisement
 Hath since embolden'd your presuming people
 To overt acts of hostile insolence :
 A Spaniard is not safe to walk your streets,
 And take the air with Mexicans, *they grow*
So valiant : this will end in rank disloyalty :
 Some plan must be contrived and executed
 For yours, and our salvation.

MONTEZUMA.

You 've considered
 What that may be—consult for me, command me,
 I breathe but for your service.

CORTEZ (*aside*).

How subdued

By wholesome rigour his impatient spirit !

Accept my thanks : one way there is —

MONTEZUMA.

Pronounce it :

You say it is of special benefit

To both of us.

CORTEZ.

Truly ; sire, this it is :

Convene the lords and populace of Mexico,
'Twere fittest in the public square ; thyself
Preside : there, in the view of all thy subjects,
Kneeling submit th' imperial diadem
To me, as to my lord the king of Spain,
And in capacity of his ambassador,
I will recrown thee.

MONTEZUMA.

(Speaking deliberately.) And so wear my crown
As feudatory of another sovereign ;
Is that your meaning ?

CORTEZ.

Ay, Montezuma.

MONTEZUMA.

Let thy will be done.

CORTEZ.

I 'm grateful for this prompt and fit compliance.
When shall your highness' pleasure be perform'd ?

MONTEZUMA.

TO-NIGHT.

CORTEZ.

To-night, my lord ?

MONTEZUMA.

To-night, or never

In this world ; and in the world beyond us,
 Kingdoms and crowns are not : they are but bubbles,
 Borne on the floods of time, and dissipate
 Into the breathless ocean of eternity.
 So see it be to-night.

CORTEZ.

The hour, my lord ?

MONTEZUMA.

That one before the midnight let it be.
 Now it is done, which may not be forgotten,
 It shall be instantly proclaim'd. Any thing further ?

CORTEZ.

Nothing : had you been ever thus considerate—

MONTEZUMA.

Thou splendid robber ! say, I am *considerate* !
 Say, I am *mad*, and let thee strip me naked !
 Where are my palaces of gold and silver ?
 My ivory thrones ? My diamond-fretted monuments ?
 I saw, and knew thee not, honor'd and fear'd thee.
 Knave ! thou hast cheated me of victory.
 Give me the empire ; give me my fair child ;
 Give me back all myself, my rest, my reason,
 And World ! Judge thou, which of us both shall conquer,
 Oh God ! oh God ! I pray you, pardon me :
 I dream'd last night I was a king ; to-day,
 When I awoke, I found myself a beggar,
 And that has spoil'd my temper : pardon me,

CORTEZ.

You will not fail to do—

MONTEZUMA.

I'm pledged.

CORTEZ.

Farewell !

When next we meet, I trust our purposes
Will be made evident to all the world.

MONTEZUMA.

Of that I am assured.

CORTEZ.

Farewell, till night.

[*Exit CORTEZ.*

MONTEZUMA.

I am alone again, to perpetrate
A deed most prudent, just, and merciful.
I have consider'd what befits my state ;
Nothing but death can cleanse me. I am foul
And spotted over like a Beast :
Hither, thou slave ! *SLAVE comes forward.*

I had a daughter ; Stars,
Which hang their lamps over the chaste coronal
Of sovereign mountains, never saw such purity.
She is no more : her virtue was my daughter ;
That being dead, I have none left to love.
Dost thou wait ? Go unto the prince Zobaya—
Bid him command my people to assemble—
Reach me my tablets ; I cannot tell thee wherefore.
Something is on the earth, a counterfeit,
A lie, that shall not be, when I am gone,

To sow corruption on my glorious name,
Which I, by dying well, shall save from worms.
Give me—(*Writes.*) I pray you, doth my right hand
tremble?—

No! Then be sure I have o'ercome the tyrant.

[*Writes and speaks at intervals.*

Let them make exhibition of a slave!
Why am I chosen from the multitude
Of craven hearts, which suck humility
Ev'n with their mother's milk, from cowardice
Of puling infancy, manhood's disgrace,
And age's shifting, cringing sycophancy?
Oh, the abomination of this spectacle!
When I am past, and have outrun calamity,
Will they not make them weapons out of stones,
And plunge the monsters into pits, and bruise them
Till they die? Yes, my nation will avenge me.
Most living men are born slaves; most men die so:
It is the charter of *their* life; but I—
Will perish, fond of death, which is my freedom;
And from my trampled dust shall spring a power
To rouse the dullest bondsman in the land
From vassalage to vengeance.

It is over;

Here! bear these tokens to the prince, and mark,
More than I have said, say thou. Montezuma
Will do in this as doth beseem a king.

Begone!

[*Exit SLAVE.*

I marvel that I am so calm.
My soul doth pause, like the high tempest; and

Within me, it is as the hollow rest
And quiet of the air before convulsion :
'Tis surely that : I shall awake again,
And find all tumult, and my spirit rending :
But for a moment, then I shall be——nothing.
Doth any wait ? Without !

Enter another SLAVE.

Why come ye thus,
One by one ? I have need of more than millions
To do me service. Is thy name Zelisco ?

SLAVE.

Ay, my king.

MONTEZUMA.

(*Taking him by the hand.*) Fare-you-well, my faithful
servant.

Answer me not ; I see you have no health ;
Else 'tis the wan reflection of my face
I mark in yours, and think you are in sickness.

SLAVE.

My beauteous child is dead.

MONTEZUMA.

Fie ! do not weep :
It is not like a man ;—I have no child.

SLAVE.

Alas ! alas ! my babe was foully murder'd ;—
A fierce Castilian smote it with a sword,
Because——its mother——

MONTEZUMA.

Would not be his——MORA !
Let us not speak of this ;—thy child is dead,

Therefore——no more ! I have a craving thirst.—
 I call'd for thee—fetch me a cup of wine—
 Not yet : I walk'd abroad this morn before
 The sun-light : look ! In yonder gardens shone
 Blossoms upon the bosom of the earth,
 Like stars of many colours : there were some
 Beside the stream, two paces from a cedar.
 I stood; and gazed at them : so gloriously
 They wore the morning dew upon their heads,
 As if they were crown'd queens of all the flowers :
 Robed were they in the purple, and anon,
 When the slow lazy breeze came muttering by,
 The frail stems bow'd, and dipp'd their long black
 leaves,
 Like hair, below the water.

SLAVE.

Oh, my lord—

MONTEZUMA.

Silence ! I know in each particular bud
 There lies, shut up, like honey in the bee,
 A drop of death ;—pluck me a score of them,
 And shed their juice into my wine.

SLAVE.

My God !

'Tis mortal poison.

MONTEZUMA.

It is saving health,
 Or—do I bid thee drink it ? Slave, begone !

[Exit SLAVE.]

Now let me listen : I could love to hear

Some cheering sound : hark ! Then the boatman sang—
I heard the splash of oars upon the lake,
And now, I think, the dancers on the hill
Shout. *No:* how noiseless ! This is horrid silence !
If I might hear the whirlwind or the thunder—
'Twere good : no voice ! no echo ! I'll to bed !

[*Goes to the casement.*]

Yon splendid orb flames down the regal dome ;
An hour or two, and he will sink behind
The mountain-girdle of the earth : the God
Is throughout all the world, and not a cloud
Flecks the magnificent red vault of heaven.
Beautiful Planet ! I have worshipp'd always,
And praised and offer'd in thy glorious temples :—
To-night thou shalt descend, and be ensepulchred ;
To-morrow thou shalt rise, and be a miracle :
But **I**, which am a sun in Mexico,
Shall set with gloomy haste in storm for ever.
So then farewell, thou Sun ! Ah, never more
Shall I proclaim thy rising with loud hymn ;
Yet thou wilt come, and scatter virgin light
Over the land, in thy meridian noon,
But Montezuma will have pass'd away ;
And thou wilt linger in the golden air
For many a lovely, after-eventide,
To gladden every soul but Montezuma.

Re-enter SLAVE with a goblet.

Farewell, farewell ! I shall not see thee more.
Hast thou obey'd me ?

SLAVE.

Faithfully, alas !

This draught is mightier than the mightiest will ;
 'Twill quench a human life in just eight hours.

MONTEZUMA.

Ay, that must be after the birth of morn.
 I thank you, sir.

SLAVE (*throws himself at the feet of MONTEZUMA.*)

My king, my absolute master,
 I am thy deathful minister ; oh, crush me !
 I dare not live the wicked thing I am.

MONTEZUMA.

Arise ! Men's destinies are with the Gods,
 Not in each other's hands : no more, I charge thee—
 Wear thou a chain of gold : I could e'en weep
 To make so poor a gift, but ah ! Zelisco,
 Thou hast the chiefest part of all my riches :
 Go, and perform thy latest act of duty ;
 Send me some officers : go,—*not a word !*

[*Exit SLAVE.*

The wronger and the wrong'd, the monarch and
 The traitor, friend and foe, parent and child,
 We tread upon the verge of the black desert
 Betwixt us and the everlasting Paradise
 Of souls : the giddy thought cannot attain
 So far, unto that wonderful empyrean.
 Oh I am blind and weary with long gazing
 Upon that shadowless night, and void immensity !
 I know that *I* must end :
She will not undergo the consciousness,

But as a hollow fruit shakes down to earth,
So shall she drop when the quick blast doth visit her.
I would that I might die too o' th' sudden ;
My soul, it is a fearful apprehension.

Enter OFFICERS.

Good morrow, sirs : they come to say 'tis time.
Swim not, my brain ; they are my officers.

OFFICER.

Your majesty——

MONTEZUMA.

I did ; I want ye : Reptile Horror !
How thou dost creep about me ! hitlier ! thou !
(Takes him aside.) Softly : when didst thou do a
murder last ?

OFFICER.

My lord !

MONTEZUMA.

Thou darest not tell me, in thy life thou hast not
Bathed thy strong hand in blood, and never wiped it
Till it was dry ; I 'll not believe thee, man :
Why thou hast cut the veins of small white infants,
Of beauteous girls, and more such delicate victims :—
Yet I say not that thou hast stabb'd the innocent :
Mark that : confess !

OFFICER.

It was my office once
To slay such culprits as were judged in law.

MONTEZUMA.

Return to that : I have a deed to do,

A very pious, honourable deed,
Which being done should make thee, wert thou ranker
Than the grave's mould, wholesome and white like snow.
(*To the other Officer, who retires.*) List, if there be a
footstep to disturb us:—

Let me take hold upon thy raiment:—err not!
Thou know'st within the melancholy grove
Girt by the walls of the imperial palace,
A tardy, deep, and sullen current rolls
Unwillingly: thou may'st have sat upon
Its banks, and seen its glassy face made black
By tall pines which lean over it and talk,
And trees that weep into its stream: no secret
Beneath that solitary water's wave
Can the bright eye discern: the lights in heaven
See not what's done under the strict embrace
Of those protecting boughs—you wander, sir.

OFFICER.

Indeed, my lord, I know the place.

MONTEZUMA.

To-night,

When all is hush'd and quiet in the city,
At the mid season of this coming night,
Enter the palace of the kings of Mexico;
She will not sleep, tear her away from silence:
Thither transport the young and beautiful wretch,
Lower than the last creeping water next
The earth, plunge——Ha! slave! Thou—
Thou know'st my wish, and *more* than that I know,
Yet wish most fervently: let it be done.

OFFICER.

On whom, my lord ?

MONTEZUMA.

Canst thou not spare me that ?

I dare not murmur, Heav'n ! I have a child—

OFFICER.

The princess Mora !

MONTEZUMA.

Thou hast said : there is

But one who owns that name and title, which
The Gods keep from the vile in after-times !

I, and the Gods that made her, want her dead ;

It is a glorious thing to be our minister :

Remember ! Do not spill her blood ! oh, that

Were infamous ! At midnight let her drown ;

Watch ye by torchlight that she yield her strength,

And die at last——what hast thou heard ?

OFFICER.

My lord,

I am instructed, and shall carefully

Perform.

MONTEZUMA.

Well : oh, be secret, like the hours,
Which know their offices, and do, but tell not.

OFFICER.

Most strictly.

MONTEZUMA.

And more fatal than—this cup :
Having once clutch'd thy victim, sure to kill.

OFFICER.

Even so.

MONTEZUMA.

Then farewell: but dread not, swerve not,
 For thou shalt scare the nestled vulture forth
 From bowering heights, to flap her wings, and cry
 Unto the midnight heavens bitterly;
 Think it not ominous, for thou shalt hear
 The plumed heron dash out of the waters;
 And haply, for I know his court is there,
 The sov'reign eagle may forsake his mount,
 And trace a magic circle right above ye,
 Then scream and go off to the stars: fear nothing—
 These things are in the course of nature, sir;
Or if not, then the deed ye do is mighty,
 And must be done in spite of prodigies.

Farewell!

[*Exeunt OFFICERS.*

They're gone:—(*grasping the goblet.*)—Oh, welcome,
 welcome, more than ease—
 Thou life-conferring, bright, omnipotent chalice,
 Be good to me: do not afflict me much:
 I love thee, but I fear thee:—(*drinks*)—icy draught!
 Now rush unto my couch, and sleep away
 From time: until the hour—my soul! I fly from thee.

[*Exit*

SCENE II.

The Court of a Public Building, with the Streets of Mexico in Perspective. Soldiers in the Back-ground: in Front, ZOBAYA reading Tablets, and a Messenger: at a little Distance from them, ROBILDA.

ZOBAYA.

As doth beseem a king ! You bring ill tidings :
I have heard you : Robilda, if she come
I will not talk with her ; prevent her, sir.
Now, I warm with resentment, well I know
The king will act as doth become his station ;—
But he's alone : *alone?* To arms ! to arms !
Soldiers ! and patriots ! Fellow-countrymen !
Out with bright swords, and throw away the sheaths !
Deliver us from shame ! Elate your crests,
And further than the heart of every foe
Speed your death-dealing javelins ! This night
They drag the emperor, the betray'd majesty
Of regions that adore the Sun, from darkness
And vile captivity to infamy,
The worst that can be : now be Mexicans !
Honour your king, and love your families :
Redeem the homes you and your fathers dwelt in :
Restore the great Gods to their holy places.
And there is left what is most worth defending ;
Save blood that is not spilt ! Save life, not sprung

Yet from the womb to perish of a dagger :
 Save from pollution all that remains chaste,
 And from unholly touch what's undefiled !
 I call upon ye, as ye are human men,
 To snatch revenge for things spoilt and destroy'd,
 Utterly shamed, dismay'd, and burnt to ashes.
 I have determined what and where our hopes are—
 Their ships which float upon the lake must be
 Inflamed or sunk, and I will see to it :
 It shall be done by night ; whence I'll return
 To meet my king, and wither his oppressor.
 Meantime, Otumba, you shall have confounded
 The Spaniard in his castle, and laid waste
 The earth it loaded, then we'll join our strength
 And chase away, like straws before the wind,
 The tyrants we have cursed, and borne with still.
 You are as mighty as your cause ! Be rash,
 And show like fire that scares the wolves : strike home,
 And strike for ever till they fall ! Then wash
 The streets clear of their blood, and live in peace
 Immortally !

ROBILDA.

My lord, she comes, the princess.

ZOBAYA.

I will not be perplex'd. Exalt your standards.

Enter MORA.

MORA.

Halt, every one ! My lord, my husband, stay !
 I'm breathless : I have kept pace with the winds :

And what a desert have I traversed with them !
I cannot stand : the air swims round about me,
Stopping my breath, and wildering my brain :
Let me rest here : it is my husband's breast
On which I lay my head : *speak to me softly.*

ZOBAYA.

Go from me : we don't know each other.

MORA.

What !

I do not know thou art my gracious lord
Zobaya ? Know'st thou not I am thy wife ?
A bride of sighs and tears : that's not *my* work ——
That *had been* very fond, and *am* most faithful.

ZOBAYA.

Ha !

MORA.

Am I not thy wife ? Am I not faithful ?
Kill me, if I am not ; or say I am not,
And I will kill myself.

ZOBAYA.

Hearken thou, Mora ! Thou, the Christian Mora !

MORA.

I will not hearken if thou call me so.
The Christian Mora ! 'Twas my father's word
When he did curse me : *thou* hast learn'd it too.
Why dost thou call me Christian, and not curse me ?

ZOBAYA.

I will not curse thee ; for my grief and shame
Are mightier than my curse with the world's father.

MORA.

Cold-hearted man, say thou didst love me once—
 And swear it by the pure divinity
 Of the Sun, thy God, and my God—swear, *swear it*—
 Or by the Moon, when 'tis as white as truth—
 By the young stars, and crystal empery—
 By the crown'd majesty of my great father—
 By every thing in nature beautiful
 Swear—else I'll not trust thee: thou didst never
 Love me, not when thou wed'st me.

ZOBAYA.

I wed thee, Mora,
 For the high interests of Mexico,
 To link and prosper the imperial family,
 And to perpetuate the heaven-born race
 Of Montezuma; and most true it is,
 I held thine honour dearer than thyself;
 Yet was I thy true friend; of all the world
 Thy betroth'd husband was thy friend, believe it:
 Of this enough—for mine integrity,
 And good account with men—now I abjure thee!

MORA.

Hear me—

ZOBAYA.

Nay, let me say, for present time,
 And time to come, all I may ever say;
 Thou, the cold proselyte of another faith,
 Stoop'dst down beside me, with a matchless front
 Of insolent smoothness, with a honey'd falsehood

Ripe on thy specious lip,
And gavest me a poor remnant of a wife
And love, which was pretence, or pillaged
Property of a slave, and he a Spaniard !
Ay, bow thy head ; the guilty should be humble,
And ever let the traitor stand abash'd,
And blush to earth.

MORA.

I will speak : thou art false—
To me and all, Zobaya : thou hast done
Too much, sir, for the vile worm to bear ; and
But that thou hast confounded me with pain,
And agony which clings to every nerve,
I'd tell thee what a slanderer thou art.

ZOBAYA.

So : I deserve it.

MORA.

I am innocent—

Of all the wickedness—the cradled babe
May be condemn'd for capital offence
Hereafter, if you say that I am guilty :
See, I am innocent ; for if to droop
Be infamous, why should it not be sure
And rev'rend sign of unimpeachable purity,
To look bold in the face of my accuser ?

ZOBAYA.

Thy father's curse is law unalterable.

MORA.

If my own father be unnatural,

Will you, my husband, shelter under that
 Which is his fault? Unless perchance you seek
 Some plea to libel me, and cast me from you.

ZOBAYA.

I do not, princess.

MORA.

Days will be, Zobaya,
 You shall not know such comfort as I draw
 From my own heart's acquittal: your crime shall live,
 When all the vain reproof I bear, be only
 Consider'd in the penance ye shall feel.

ZOBAYA.

Till then, farewell! Pursue me not again:
 Never more let us meet: I counsel thee,
 Forsake the palace of thy fathers; die,
 (Pray it be soon) better than thou hast lived,
 Somewhere remote, where none may see thee die,
 Or scorn thee when thou art dead.

MORA.

Oh, pity me!

ZOBAYA.

Leave me.

MORA.

I cannot; I am weak; I will not
 Lose my last hope.

ZOBAYA (*disengaging himself from her.*)

Nay then; I must be free.

MORA (*following him.*)

I will cling fast in death.

ZOBAYA.

Away—my soldiers !

March to the temple ! Shelter there till even :
On !

[Exit ZOBAYA with Mexicans. MORA staggers
a few paces, and falls senseless.

(Enter SEBASTIAN from the city.)

SEBASTIAN.

Who are they light enough of heart for this ?
Mexicans ! Ay, as the great planet rolls
Over their region, they adore the power
That generates and ripens all for us. [Comes forward.
How stands the brilliant consequence I claim
Of fate ? Remote, or near ? I do not think
She laughs amid the crowd : [sees MORA.

Ha ! 'tis the princess :
Quite fallen ! Is this well ? I hear no breathing :
Still ! Pale ! And if I touch her, yet she stirs not :
Mora ! Oh, villain ! Mora ! I'll not lay
My withering hand upon thee. Speak ! Cold too ?
Was ever such a fiend ? If it be — Mora !

Mother of God ! She's dead.

MORA (recovering.)

Who's here with me ?

SEBASTIAN.

She breathes ! she speaks ! Mora !

MORA.

It is broad day,

And I have slept till now——on the bare earth ?
How's this? Oh, misery !

SEBASTIAN.

It should be thus :

She's desolate enough : yet do I fear—
Fear what? To prosper when my travail's o'er?
I know—it is *expectancy so ripe*,
'Tis worse than dread : my pulses throb : I sicken
When the thought comes, she's mine, or may be—nay—

MORA.

I will not ask again what is my crime:
I'm innocent of any, and much wrong'd:
(*Suddenly.*) But will ye see it done, ye wisest Gods ?

SEBASTIAN.

Sorrow is like a tempest-cloud at noon,
And oft the sleeping lightning of revenge
Hides in the vaporous folds. Why weepest thou ?

MORA.

Begone! As all the world from me, so I
From thee am separate!

[*She retires to a farther part of the stage, and talks as to herself.*

I'll not endure :

Zobaya dare to spurn me! All the city
Dare so to slander me! Can I not vex them?
What should I do ?

SEBASTIAN.

Talk with me : tell me all.

MORA.

Canst thou by saying merely, It shall *not* be,

Make that which is, as it had never been ?
Make thyself innocent, and me unsuffering ?

SEBASTIAN.

I cannot : I can weep all my life with thee.

MORA.

Weep ! and alone : think'st thou I am so poor
To weep the dull day through, and the long night,
That am abused ? *I would I were a God,*
Or strong man at the head of mighty armies,
With fire in my right hand, and spear and target—
So speed me Heaven, as I would burn this land up
With crackling flame, and sweep before my chariot
The multitude of liars, that hath drank
My fame, and blood—*I am so wrathful.*

SEBASTIAN.

Would'st thou have vengeance ? Say on whom.

MORA.

On thee

First.

SEBASTIAN.

Cruel Mora ! Heav'n is my judge,
And by the Christian's Heav'n, I swear I love thee.

MORA.

Go on ; I'm sure 'tis false ; or, if not false,
I hate thee, so I may, or may not hear thee,
Just as my humour is.

SEBASTIAN.

I love thee better——

(Scorn me as thou wilt) better than all things,
Except humanity, and so thou hatest me.

MORA.

What dost thou mean? Didst thou not worm from
me,
And then betray—

SEBASTIAN.

Didst thou account me, Mora,
So selfish, to hold fast my life, and leave
My friends, so many bold and liberal men,
To die by such a heartless treachery
As that thou warn'dst me of?

MORA.

I had not warn'd thee
Else.

SEBASTIAN.

Therefore I deceived thee.

MORA.

Me, thou lov'dst?

SEBASTIAN.

Now tell me, princess;
Tell truly, should not one so mean as I am,
And one so estimable as thou art,
Or any other twain beside ourselves,
Perish and turn to dust, rather than *all*
Of them?

MORA.

That's true, indeed.

SEBASTIAN.

But, listen to me:

There is no solitary good on earth
I follow like *thee*, Mora. Oh, thy voice

Is sweeter to my soul than music, born
Under the star-light o' clear nights, when winds
Are full of song, and sweep along the chords
Of harps Æolian. Wilt thou not forgive me
That with unhallow'd force (shame follow me !)
I would have dragg'd thee once away, and slain
More holy men, if some had dared to cross me ?
I was quite wilder'd then : but then, my princess,
'Twas the exceeding love I bore thee——

MORA.

Peace !

Thou art the cause.

SEBASTIAN.

Consume me for it ! Tell me,
What keen-edged lie use they to stab thine honour ?
That's thy wrong — is't not thy white fame they
spoil ?

MORA.

They charge me—Oh, how false they are ! they say—
I cannot utter it.

SEBASTIAN.

They should be chaff
Sprinkled along the course of the east wind,
And swept off with its wings. How I abhor them !
But thy wise father——

MORA.

Hold ! No more ! no more !

SEBASTIAN.

Thy husband——

MORA.

No! He shall not be *my* husband:
I am an outcast. [She leans on him, and weeps.

SEBASTIAN.

Thy falling tear-drops sear like melted lead.
Look up: nay, droop not thus; they cannot reach thee.
I'll swear thou art more lovely than the Star
Which shines at even, and more holy than
The silver-shafted Moon.

MORA.

I have no race, no country, and no home.
I suffer this for thy sake, oh, Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN.

Oh Mora! Mora! there are happy lands—
Come with me, where the sun rains milder light
Than from the yellow skies of Mexico.
Come, I have friends shall be thy friends, a father
Shall be to thee a father, kinder too
Than one you must not think of more; and *I*—
I will not lose an hour of day or darkness
Out of thy sight.

MORA.

You make me weep to hear you.

SEBASTIAN.

Beautiful Mora! on some foreign mead,
(What is there but despair in Mexico?)
Let us sit down, and weave the fruitful hours
Into a jocund life, as wanton girls
Twine wreaths from blossoms: will it not be sweet?

We'll go to Castile, or we'll not dwell here;
I shall die broken-hearted at thy feet.

MORA.

Pity me, pity me—I thought you false—
I am so faint and fearful—

SEBASTIAN.

Be mine own:
Can you not love me? I will ever think
Of what you were, and are, and what I am.
Shall we not go together? We *will* go
Over the quick waves lightly; love, we'll travel
Faster than they, or any cloud that sails
I' th' air.

MORA.

DEAR SEBASTIAN! say not so.
I speak, and know not what—No, I will never—

SEBASTIAN.

To-night you shall have rest, and I will watch you,
Within the Spaniard's palace: twilight comes.
Her sense is gone: one long, one lingering kiss—
The first—there is that fragrance on her lips,
Which never leaves red roses when they die.
Let us away: before the morning wakes,
We will depart, to reach the ocean shore.
Our tall ships ride in the bay. Are you so ill?
I will support you, Sweet! Wear this; 'twill screen you:
So— [Throws his Cloak around her.

MORA.

Whither?

SEBASTIAN.

Ha! there is a star abroad
Already: look, my peerless Love ! step bolder—

MORA (*faintly.*)

No—no—Sebastian. [She sinks upon his shoulder.

SEBASTIAN.

She's mine: I've won the imperial beauty. [Exeunt.

ACT V. SCENE I.

The grand Square of Mexico.—The Mexican Nobility and Populace assembled.

MONTEZUMA (*seated*) : CORTEZ, FELIX, ALVARADO,
and some SPANIARDS.

MONTEZUMA.

Throw wide the portals that contain the Empire,
And let all nations in : I look beyond them ;
The mighty dead are waiting for me.
Have I done all things well that I shall dare
To come amongst them ? The perceptible awe
That fastens on me ! I shall lose myself :
Slow breeze, I die too soon without thee ; speed !
I thank my God for the sweet breath of life :
The dim roar gathering out of crowds on crowds,
A mist of sound, keeps night awake : behold !
The populous ocean hath wash'd unto me ;
Methinks I am a Rock, the constant surge
Chafes at but wears not ; when the drunken seas
Lift up and charge my tempest-stricken brow,
I am eternal, still, let what may, be :
Where is my crown ?

CORTEZ (*speaking to ALVARADO.*)

Ay, scorn, or worse ; I'll have him here, or nowhere.
(To MONTEZUMA.) Emperor, are the patricians met ?

MONTEZUMA.

I think so.

CORTEZ.

Where's your family?

MONTEZUMA (*pointing to the people.*)

Around me.

CORTEZ.

Nay, where's Zobaya?

MONTEZUMA.

Something's left to hope;

I know not where he is.

CORTEZ.

Is't fit the heir

Of Mexico should live in ignorance

By whose consenting he shall govern here?

What keeps him back?

MONTEZUMA.

I bid him come: Zobaya!

I am full of thee: I think it is as present

As the night: ha! or else he must be—dead!

CORTEZ.

What holds him from submission to his king?

(*A Voice from the Crowd.*)

HIS DUTY TO HIS COUNTRY!

CORTEZ.

Treason!

MONTEZUMA.

(*Clasping his hands, and stifling his exultation.*) Thanks!

Arrest the slave! (One is brought forward.) ZELISCO?

Let him pass:

Now, by my faith, a most impertinent knave :
Room for him ! *my great heart !* My lord Fernando,
Are we not friends ? (*To the people.*) Silence ! I want to
speak :

(*To CORTEZ.*) Will you stand by me, sir ? *You do not
doubt me ?* —

Now, I am ready.

CORTEZ.

I trust all to you.

MONTEZUMA.

I know that my avenger is at hand ;
I shall die on a bed as sweet as Bridal ones :
Not a breath ? Then I am with ye, Countrymen !
Land of the fruit and flower ! Golden Mexico !
Bower of young virgins ! Aiery of valour !
Thou Spear and Target ! thou Ray, and thou Rainbow !
And thou too, City like a plume ! thou Cedar !
Thou Gem in ocean's dress ! Created Babe
Above the earth, dropp'd gently through the air,
And laid to nurse upon the waters ! Thou,
Mine own ! my native Land ! *my Mexico !*
I'll sell thee for a blazing Marygold
To wear about my temples at noon-day.
I hear you murmur : no, you *dare* not murmur.
This man doth make it thunder at his will,
And he is choleric. You will not murmur ;
I that am born above ye, and set over ye,
The glory of my justice is your anchor :
Shew me among ye one that is ashamed ?
Who's here that thinks I shall bring scorn upon him ?

I say, that man of ye doth strive against me.
 Am I the only rebel in my country?
 Who's base, and thinks I will degrade the emperor?
 Let him stand forth, and sacrifice himself!
 Who dares to breathe that I will yield my Crown?

CORTEZ.

Thou dost not mean it: but, no more of this;
 It is not to the point.

MONTEZUMA.

Well, to the point;

(In a loud tone to the people.) HE WANTS TO TAKE MY
 CROWN FROM ME!

CORTEZ.

How's this?

MONTEZUMA.

I have a word for thee: when thou camest hither,
 Thou, and the rest, we guess'd not what ye were:
 How should we? Now, we know not what ye are.
 We thought ye might be Gods: we heard
 The death-drums ever rattling about ye:
 Your dress, your speech, we could not understand;
 And so we said, If you are stern divinities,
 Lo! we prepare a human sacrifice:
 If you are gentle deities, we lay
 Incense, and variegated plumes before you:
 If you are men, like to ourselves, we send
 You meat, and bread, and fruit to nourish you.
 We met the stranger at our gates, and which
 Among you was not welcomed like a brother?
 Ye hunger'd; with what joy we feasted you!

Shelterless were ye ; gave we not a home ?
Are ye not satisfied ? Well then, be rich !
Here's gold and silver for ye ; drain the mines ;
Leave not an ingot !—Is an ingot left ?
Stands there the house in Mexico unstripp'd
To feed your appetites ? What would you further ?
Well, ye shall search ; *ye did*, and just like lightning,
Withering what ye look'd upon. At Cholula,
Six thousand of my subjects ye consumed
By fire and sword. Temples and Palaces
Burn'd and gave light to ye. In Mexico,
Ye massacred ; your blood was spilt, my people ;
Those inarticulate Columns know it all—
The shrieks, and deaths, and agony ! Huge forms
Like that, and my own lofty dwelling-place
Are conscious of it : yon ambitious Tower
Look'd down upon it. The innocent Lake shrunk back ;
The astonish'd Air flew to the extremest Heav'n,
And told of shrieks, and deaths, and agony !
Tyrant, thy frown is vain : you adore our Temple ;
It is the palace where God keeps his images.
It was but yesterday that one of these
Made riot at our altars, raising high
A senseless cross upon the ruins of gods ;
Gods and men are alike to savages !
Is our high-priest dead ? They stabb'd him in the temple.
I have come here to speak, and I will speak.
My People, he would make me silent ! Is it
Your will that I proceed ? Ye wave your hands ;
Yet wherefore so ? *Do ye not know these things ?*

CORTEZ.

By Heav'ns, there shall not be another syllable :
One word, and you die.

MONTEZUMA.

HERE ! *At your peril !*

If you do love your emperor, listen now—
He wants to take the crown from me ! Here it is !
(Holding it up.) This is the crown of Mexico !
Shall I let him have it ?

CORTEZ.

Madman, forbear !

MONTEZUMA.

Madman, *thou !* Dost thou not feel my presence ?
The emperor is talking with his subjects.
Do ye consent that I shall yield my crown ?—
They will not have it so ; then what can *I* ?

CORTEZ.

They will, they shall : make bondsmen of their children,
And set their lands afloat upon the seas,
Rather than I, Fernando Cortez, be
Their fool, or thine : I will disgrace thee first.

MONTEZUMA.

Oh, never more.

CORTEZ.

KING ; I will bind thee here,
Here on thy throne ; so they may laugh at thee :
I 'll slay the tenth man of them all, and thee ;
Acknowledge thee a vassal.

MONTEZUMA.

Thee a villain !

CORTEZ.

I will not drag thee down. Keep back the crowd.
Bring fetters for the king, and tie him fast ;
Chains ! do ye hear ? Chains ! chains !

ZOBAYA (*rushing up the stage.*)

CHAINS ADAMANTINE !

And quivers full of arrows !—(*to some without*)—Halt
there !

[*Standing by the side of the king, his hand
upon the throne.*]

Now, what's the business ?

CORTEZ (*sarcastically.*)

You are a soldier, sir !

ZOBAYA.

You know me : few words ! What do you wait for ?
By my red weapon, the imperial diadem
Sleeps on a cushion ! Give me hold : *who forbids ?*
Strike all the drums ! (*To MONTEZUMA.*) My lord !

(*Placing the crown on the head of MONTEZUMA.*)

The king is crown'd !

CORTEZ (*in a low tone to ALVARADO.*)

Retreat !

Enter MANUEL in haste.

MANUEL.

Fernando ! succour !

CORTEZ.

Speak it ! what ?

MANUEL.

We are assaulted, and give ground.

CORTEZ.

By Hell !

We come ! Send the artillery on board
 The brigantines, and batter down the city.

ZOBAYA.

^{S.} Stand to your ground : an hour ago the lake
 Blush'd at your burning ships.

CORTEZ.

*Thou liest !—(To the SPANIARDS)—Away !*ZOBAYA (*interposing.*)

No, not a foot ! (*To those without.*) Extend your lines,
 and make

A wall of arms ! Behold ! a thousand men
 At every pass ! Break through them, if thou canst.

CORTEZ.

Despair ! Be thou the first——

[*Makes a thrust at ZOBAYA, who fells him dead.*

ZOBAYA.

To strike !

MEXICANS.

REVENGE !

[*Tumult : MONTEZUMA rises on his throne.—,*
The Scene closes.

SCENE II.

An Apartment in the Mexican Palace.

Enter MORA.

The difficult air stifles me :
I pray to Heav'n that I may keep my sense :
Patience ! what brings me hither ? Grant me that :
Is it my fault that he should think me fair ?
And make me——what ? *oh, what ?* I rush'd away,
For all at once a thought came, like a whirlwind,
And then I could feel utterly what I was——
Come I not out under the garish stars
To look for thunderbolts ? I know not else :
Where am I ? What are all things here ? the void
I live in ? There is nothing seen nor thought of
In this place : I have lost my reason in it :
Breath ! breath ! *I am a buried thing alive !*
If——(*suddenly*)—All but that ! I will not have my
pray'r !
I will be mad ! I *must* die raving mad !
I know not what I am, nor what I talk.
Why the world is——Out ! *'tis a beastly world !*
I 'll die : I 'll live : there is no other life
But death for me. Teach me to get it——

Enter ROBILDA.

Ha !

Is 't there? Hast thou a knife about thee? Why,
I think you are my father's slave——POOR GIRL!

ROBILDA.

I pity her from my soul.

MORA.

I want thee gone;
I want myself to go: I thought to hide
From all of ye. (*Approaching him.*) Tell me if I do weep
For many, many years, dost think that I
Can make a fountain of my tears to drown
My shame?

ROBILDA.

Lie down, and sleep.

MORA.

And never wake:
How sweet that sleep is! There is no spell
In downy pillows if we sleep so soundly:
I 'm hollow at the heart, and at the brain
Fever'd: I cannot lie down to a sleep
That 's full of dreams.

ROBILDA.

How sad she talks!

MORA.

Hist! Silence
Is King here: He, you know, keeps no court; I
Will wed with him. Ha! will you dare to come?
Begone! I am a high offender, and will not
Be judged by thee.

ROBILDA.

Sweet princess, there are none

To judge thee here: all are met in the city.
She hears, but apprehends not.

MORA (*throwing open the doors which lead into the gardens.*)

Quick! unbar

The gates that lead up to the throne of Death:
I will go sit upon the step, and watch him;
Perchance, he'll deign to look upon me: ah!
Chill comes his breath; it fills the room apace;
If any one be near me, he's in peril.
I see a thousand lamps which burn around
A broad black canopy, and one pale gem;—
The phantom lord doth frown: what pomp's about him!
Low whispers! He is in council on the affairs
Of men. Hush! I'll steal silently, and listen.
Hush! hush!

[*Exit, through the doors.*]

Enter OFFICERS.

ROBILDA.

What news? Come any of you from the congress?

FIRST OFFICER.

No: from the sacred presence some hours since.

ROBILDA.

Listen! the air is full of conversation.

FIRST OFFICER.

We hear the clamour of the multitude,
And distant thunder, though the night is fair.

ROBILDA.

Silence! A cry!

FIRST OFFICER.

Of joy, is't not?

ROBILDA.

What would ye ?

FIRST OFFICER.

Talk with the princess Mora : sir, we have
The emperor's authority for it.

[*ROBILDA points to the doors.*

OFFICERS.

Save you !

[*Exeunt, through them.*

ROBILDA.

Good night !

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Mexican Palace.

A grand Flight of Steps, ascending to a Range of Columns.

MONTEZUMA sitting, attended by a SOLDIER.

MONTEZUMA.

Such universal peril doth abound,
And such a cry of terror and pursuit,
The Voice spreads nowhere, and the wither'd arm
Of majesty is a contempt : kind soldier,
The power that 's absolute in the throng and battle,
Shall honour thee for this before all men.
I pray thee, leave me.

SOLDIER (*offering water.*)

Cool thy parched lips.

MONTEZUMA.

I take it of thee, and with many thanks.

(*Raising it to his mouth*)—I cannot:—pour it on the ground:

Are we not slaves? Where are the Spaniards? Tell me.
SOLDIER.

Buried in earth and sea.

MONTEZUMA.

Dead? Every one?

SOLDIER.

A few—

MONTEZUMA.

Alive? I guess thou art a rebel:

What's here to do? Be swift: what hour is it?

SOLDIER

Midnight.

MONTEZUMA.

Past?

SOLDIER.

Yes.

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis very dark: I think

A star hath shot away from us: go thou.

[*Exit SOLDIER.*

Lightly, O Night; ye spirit-touching winds,
Quench not the flaming urn: I am not dying—
Oh, God forgive me, there's the cause within.
Hadst thou been willing I should pass this hour,
I might have met the next like Montezuma:
Ha! Is the slaving tyrant made a slave?
The rapid conqueror down his slippery path
Gone headlong from the conquer'd? Cold, cold air!

Empire of Mexico, thou great and free !
Methinks I see thee now, like a white virgin,
Sceptred and wing'd, perch'd on the point sublimest
Of the world :—Ah ! faint heart ! Why must I perish ?
What is 't to think, to act, *if not to know* ?
It is our ignorance which makes us mortal :
Where must we look for knowledge ? Shall we bid
The blue skies be transparent, and inform us ?
Or does the order of all circumstance
Lie in the deeps, which if they roll away
May leave us the true knowledge of ourselves ?
Can it be in the earth ? (*Stamps.*) Break, and discover !
Alas, for me too late : yet I 'll not wish
'Twere otherwise : I murder'd my own——murder'd
A daughter, like the day,—but wanton : Oh !
Not yet, mine enemy death, though I 'm weary.
A little while ; I know the pedestal
Whereon I sit : I know ye, pillars, shining
White, like a robed and religious senate ; [Rises.
Let me go nearer than your mute assembly,
To press my velvet floors and beds of gossamer :
To die is comfortable to me as
To sleep, so I will do it royally.

[*He is ascending the steps : a scream without.*
Horrible ! From the gory earth the angel
Of war shrieks to all quarters of pale Heav'n.
Beyond me is a sea of molten brass,
And men as multitudinous as waves,
Rolling away, and—gulf them ! who can stem
The tide ? My Gods, it is a victory :

I'll strike another blow, honor thy creed,
Fell Spaniard ! we'll have blood for blood !
(Rushes suddenly to the front of the Stage.) Earth's light-
nings

Have struck me blind and mad ! What's that I saw ?
I cannot think but I am already dead,
For I have caught a glimpse of things unearthly :
I'M BLASTED LIKE A LEAF !

A VOICE (*without.*)

Off ! Mercy !

MONTEZUMA.

Hear

That cry ! 'tis from the grave.

Enter MORA, wildly ; she rushes to MONTEZUMA, and lays hold upon his garment, looking at the same time towards the point of the Stage at which she entered. He averts his head.

MORA.

Away ! away !

Who art thou ? Hide me : look for them—in vain !
Crowds bear upon them : they are gone : gone—whither ?
No matter, I am saved—saved—ha ! ha ! ha !

MONTEZUMA.

Oh !

MORA.

Bind my hair ; it drops upon my neck
Like threads of fire ; breathe upon my forehead ;
Just cool my burning temples ; wipe mine eyes—

How kind ! I love thee dearly: what ? *a king?*

[*Touching his diadem.*

Lend me thy robe, I am a royal girl !

MONTEZUMA.

I—

MORA.

Speak ! I gasp to hear thee: sure thou art
Some——when I draw my hand thus 'cross my brow,
I know the golden glory of thy head :
I feel a strange delight to hold thee to me ;
Without doubt I have had a dream about thee :
A flood of reasonable thoughts flows too fast here :
I pray to know if thou be what thou seemest—
I feel all that thou art—My father !

[*She looks at him timidly as she repeats this : he turns to her : she utters faintly—*

FATHER!—

and prostrates herself before him.

MONTEZUMA.

THOU ROSY SPECTRE ! If, as I believe,
Thou com'st to warn me, I will go with thee.
If, as I do not think, thy lustrous image
Is the best nature of the dust I spurn,
And nothing is in this sublime disorder
But a mere consequence of human woe,
Then will I tread upon thee straight, and kill thee.

MORA.

Father, I come to thee for safety.

MONTEZUMA.

Ye Gods, I am betray'd ! The serpent lives.

MORA (*baring her arm.*)

Look, sir ! the cruel gripe hath pierced me through :
They dragg'd me to a pit——strong murderers, and I
So weak ! I saw the brim, and stood upon it :
Then, then I was to die : oh, wonderful !
The wrathful clouds spoke out, the glorious skies
Open'd and shower'd down fire ; men did shriek
Aloud, "*The enemy !*" The walls of Mexico
Fell down, and I stood over my tormentors :
One in his fright roll'd down the gulf, the rest
Clothed them in dust, but I spread out my wings,
And flew above the earth unto my father.
I have some pain : if they did wound mine arm,
It is not there ; *some one hath touch'd my heart.*

MONTEZUMA.

Prepare, my sword : now will I slay thee.

MORA.

Under thy curse I wither'd ; strike, 'tis mercy
Under thy hand to die :——pity me, sir ;
It was not so, it was not so, indeed.

MONTEZUMA.

Indeed, thou art a specious worthless thing—
Fool ! I have read thy secret through and through.

MORA.

If I have any such, it hath no name ;
What I have done or borne with who shall tell thee ?
It may be something, is, *in part, mine own,*
Which being done, I sicken at myself,
And hate one out of many men ; and scorn
The rest ; yet I am guiltless ; it is thou, the king,

And they, thy people, which shall answer it :
 Thou know'st it not : I'll hold my breath, and die ;
 Or thrust a dagger through my lips, and bleed
 To death without a groan : thou shalt not know it.

MONTEZUMA.

Thou hast done well to damn thyself ; for this,
 Thou shalt not live a minute : look ! look there !

[Pointing to the cross upon her neck : the moon
 shines out.

MORA.

Mark me ! A power is keeping watch for justice :
 Behold me steadfastly : I cannot hide : I will not :
 Now, what's the matter ? Father !

MONTEZUMA.

Parricide !

Christian ! and harlot ! wedded to a slave ?
 Ah ! whither went thy brave and beautiful spirit ?
 Married——fie ! To a dog ? And turn'd a Christian ?
 And base enough to bear thy foreign creed
 Where every eye may read it, on thy breast ?
 Thy breast ! *That* breast ! And what a fiend thou art,
 To blast *me* with it ! Never speak again :
 What had **I** done that thou should'st rob me of thee ?
 I will go home, and ask them for my child :
 Where is my child ? Where ?

MORA.

Where ?

MONTEZUMA.

Oh, Mora ! Mora !

MORA.

Is this a Christian's habit? Do I speak,
Or pray, or move, just in no other sort
Than as a Christian doth? What am I
Thou thyself art not? or being otherwise,
First didst not make me? Ay, to the very truth
Of what I am?

MONTEZUMA.

(*Pointing to the cross.*) Why there it is.

MORA.

(*Displaying it.*) What's this?

MONTEZUMA.

Thou mountain of iniquity! Base thing!
Tear off the cross, then swear thou art not Christian:
The babbling symbol talks of thy apostacy,
And when thou pleadest not so, says, thou liest!

MORA.

What dost thou mean?

MONTEZUMA.

Is 't not thy god?
By it, thou art a Christian.

MORA.

By my soul,
No! By the unborn day, and as I hope
To die, I speak the truth.

MONTEZUMA.

How can it be?

Away! Away! He hath confess'd.

MORA.

Confess'd !

Who hath confess'd ? To whom ? What ? Answer me !

MONTEZUMA.

'Tis vain : he hath discover'd unto me.

MORA.

Discover'd ! What ? *I burn :* oh God !

MONTEZUMA.

Sebastian—

MORA (*in a calm voice, but stifled horror.*)

Well !

MONTEZUMA.

He hath disclosed it.

MORA.

What should he disclose ?

MONTEZUMA.

Thou art his wife.

MORA.

Not his wife.

MONTEZUMA.

Daughter ! Daughter !

MORA

Not his *wife*.

MONTEZUMA.

Peace ! When thou didst stand a bride,
 Zobaya's bride, before the holy altars,
 Then thou wert——Peace ! The Spaniard hath told
 all—

A Christian, and a Christian's wedded wife.
Ha ! Turn'd to stone ? 'Tis time to die.

MORA.

My brain !

Did he say that ?

MONTEZUMA.

Ay.

MORA.

Strike thou ! It is he
Who kills :—(*kneels*)—Avenge me !

MONTEZUMA.

Never say I slew thee.

I will make cold thy lips, and pale thy cheek ;
Thou darest not call a curse upon my head :
I sent them thither : I—I bid them do it
Against the world.

MORA.

The world had suffer'd it ;
Against high Heav'n they could not :
Why dost thou know that I am innocent ?
His wife ? *His fiend !* 'Tis certain I've a haunt
Next to his heart, and I am first of all
The thoughts he has, which is a thought like fire,
Watching by night, burning by day and night :—
He said it for revenge, which he hath got ;
For worse, 'tis done, *of which I am the consequence :*
The bitterness of sorrow, when he thirsteth,
Give him to drink, my God !

MONTEZUMA.

Art thou not —

MORA.

No,

I am *not*.

MONTEZUMA.

Ah!

MORA.

Droop not, but mark, my father;
 I would not do so much by my own God;
 Down to the dust,—(*dashes the cross to the ground*)—be
 never known from it!

I would thou hadst a life, thus would I trample it.

MONTEZUMA.

How beautiful thou art now! Come more near:
 Thou'rt brave and bright all over; not his wife?

MORA.

Ask higher, and thou shalt be answer'd.

MONTEZUMA.

Too—

Too much: what! Not a Christian?

MORA.

As I live.

MONTEZUMA.

I am an earth-born slave, mould'ring to that
 Which I am come of: I do think the dust
 Is ill-conceal'd within me; nay, is uppermost.
 Stand off, thou pure thing, fit to walk the light,
 And tread upon the excellent paths, on which
 Fine spirits travel; pass me by, I pray,
 For I am base, and cannot bear thy presence.

MORA.

Alas ! Alas !

MONTEZUMA.

Thou shalt have sweet revenge :
I 'll die for thee. Away ! or do not weep :
I feel the chill hand that shall touch me last,
Lying upon my veins ; cold, cold I am !

MORA.

What fate is this ?

MONTEZUMA.

I am quite blighted by a venomous frost,
Ready to breathe my soul—if thou wilt kneel
A minute thus—away in thy embrace.

MORA.

Nay, you are well, only the nightly wind
Hath shook his icy wing above you.

MONTEZUMA.

Sweet !

I am poison'd.

MORA.

Oh no : unsay it : quick ! Swear
It is not thus, for on my sinful soul
The crime is mine : poison'd ! Oh, no—say, no.

MONTEZUMA.

"Tis thus : I speak, and I expire.

MORA.

Clasp me :

Breathe death into me : I shall never die—

MONTEZUMA.

Pure thou art.

MORA.

PURE! My everlasting life!

He calls me pure!—*Untie my silken zone.*

MONTEZUMA.

Bless thee, my poor child! I have much oppress'd thee.

MORA (*suddenly.*)

Heaven and earth! I am the wretch of all
That stagger round the world.

[*She stands motionless with horror.*

MONTEZUMA.

In pity, do not thus: watch by me, dearest:
Awake! I cannot keep my soul from fleeing——[*falls.*
Hard pillow for my head! Come, kiss me, love;
INNOCENT GIRL, embrace me: oh, I faint!
I know ye all about me: there's my child:
I have lived sometime slave, I die an emperor:
I see, and try to touch thee: hark! Soft music!
Speak to me, for I know thee—MORA! [dies.

Enter ZOBAYA (exclaiming.)

Follow the rest with hounds! light up the hills!
Destroy the dykes! invite the floods abroad!
Much more than brave ye are, my Mexicans!

[*Sees MONTEZUMA lifeless at the feet of MORA.*
Oh, an immortal thing!

MORA (*recovering from her stupefaction.*)

Take off these chains!

Somebody set me free: I'll not escape.

ZOBAYA.

Is this well done, Mora?

MORA.

A man murder'd?
And I stand here in peril? I say thou
Art guilty:—(*going up to him*)—Do I know thee?

ZOBAYA.

All a ruin.

MORA.

Thou art the king of crime! The majesty
Of blood hath made thy fine vest crimson, that
Is royal:—(*pointing to his sword*)—there's thy sceptre:
Death's thy queen:

Do call me Adamant, I pray thee do—
But I have lost my diadem: didst thou meet me
Clad like a daughter of blue heaven? Ah me!
(*Looking on the body.*) What's this? I never saw the
dead before.

How wan 'tis! How serene! Make me like it:
Can one not catch the beautiful disease?

[*Stooping and kissing it.*

Ah, what a nameless sense! Again! Again!

The Mexicans are seen pouring through the columns: they rush down the steps, the foremost dragging SEBASTIAN in chains, and exclaiming, The Destroyer! At sight of the Emperor they let fall the fetters of SEBASTIAN: he advances slowly towards MORA, unperceived by her.

MORA (*rising and motioning ZOBAYA to approach her: he stands fixed, with his arms folded.*)

Come you: come hither: throw a pall about me:

You know not how I'm hurt: indeed there's breath
In that: I'm sad: I have done nothing good:
I weep—I weep—I'm cold—will no one tell me
If this be death? Oh! *Where is the world?*

[*She turns and sees SEBASTIAN, who stretches out his arms towards her: she utters a piercing scream, and falls into them dead!*

SEBASTIAN.

TELL IT OF ME!

[*The curtain drops.*

POEMS.

P O E M S.

MUSIC.

THOU beauty ! what is all the world to thee ?
Come, with the night-wind murmuring, to me :
Oh ! born not of the earth, and not to breathe
Thy charm in bright society ! The heath,
At constellated midnight, the rose-bow'r
Is all thy pleasure, and thy palace-home ;
Thy ling'ring is about the purple dome ;
Thy travel is athwart the waveless seas ;
Thou lov'st the gentle rivers and the trees ;
The stillest and the coolest, is thine hour.

Passionate Music ! Round about the spheres
Suspend thy lute and harp, thy smiles and tears ;
And in thy march, omnipotent, aloud
Peal thy sublimer organs from the cloud :
Come gracefully ! And for my soul to sip,
Give me the breathing of thy parted lip ;

Under the starlight let me hear thy voice,
For I was born thy lover, and rejoice
To mark thee in the multitude of woods,
And on the brink of the eternal floods,
And underneath the white sun of the night,
Where thou art soft and sweetest as the light.

I pray thee come, if by the lone sea-shore
Thou bendest o'er the waters, and the sand
Is smooth beneath thy small and magic hand ;
And if thy charm is floating on the deep,
Or through the sparry caverns, full of sleep,
Breathless and calm, like sleep for evermore.

Celestial Music ! how I love thy form,
Bowing as doth the meek flower to the storm !
Thy shining arms cast upwards, and thine eye
Beaming like Noon, oh immortality !
Sweep the loud lyre, and while thy garments blue
Like air, and lighter than the dawn, and few,
Entangle the wild winds, sing thou of joy,
And passion and the brave Dardanian boy,
With her who walk'd the world without a peer,
And was, to him who died of her, how dear !

Stand tiptoe on the rock, and I will lie
Down at thy feet, and love thy minstrelsy ;
And dream of all the gorgeous things that were
Under the shadow of thy golden hair.

THE MOUNTAIN-KING.

ART thou come to visit me?
And wilt thou never stray from me?
A mortal maid may never seem
To love a shadow and a dream;
But by my heart, which is thine own,
I cannot love another one.
Scorching eyes and lustrous hair,
And the crown that blazes there,
And thy robe of rainbow blue,
And thy immortal presence too,
And thy fire-embroider'd vest,
And thy invulnerable breast,
And all the wonder that's about thee
Tell me,—I can't live without thee.
By the dew-drops which adorn
Thy girdle, and the saffron morn
Is fond of; by thy sandal shoe
Laced with light, and by the woe
Thou workest me, thou fairy thing!
And by thy dark imagining,
And by the wild and wicked pow'r
Thou usest at the midnight hour;
And by the quickness of thy flight,
And by the beautiful delight

And mischief, in thy speaking glance;
Oh ! by thy glorious countenance,
And by thy life which cannot die ;
By thy intolerable majesty ;
By all I see, and hear, and feel,
Thou art the King of Allan Hill !

Show to me thy spirits rare,
And where the crystal blossoms are ;
Take me where the mountain breeze
Dwells, and the embowering trees
Have golden fruit, and leaves of light,
And never comes the charmless night
To chase the heavenly things away
That haunt the realms of endless day ;
Show me where the treasures sleep
In the brown Earth's bosom deep ;
Blood-red rubies, sapphires blue,
And emeralds of the ocean hue ;
And clasp me with a diamond zone—
Of all the riches give me one
Gay jewel—fairy Monarch ! now
Bear me to thy mountain brow,
Wreath thine arms about me, Fay !
Spread out thy wings, and fly away !

CHARLES I. DEMANDING THE FIVE MEMBERS.

HE bravely came into the midst, the King—
With his pale front of deep imagining,
And sate among them ; there beside his throne
Stood his fair sister's son, and silently,
With head of waving ringlets ; not so He,
First in the sullen multitude, alone
With undoff'd plume : then in the hollow tone
Of majesty he spoke, and rising high,
Demanded the five members : All was still,
Save the quick throb of pulse and stifled breath,
Like trem'lous life anticipating death ;
And silence gave denial ; the proud will
Of royal Charles quail'd to the awful voice—
Fame shook affrighted Thrones, and Freedom lisp'd,
Rejoice.

MAGIC.

THERE's a voice in the murmur of waves,
To my fancy more tender and dear
Than all the rich treasures of sound—
It speaks more delight to mine ear.

In the calm trackless vestige of night
As she trips o'er each summit away,
In the stream of her silver robe's light,
Is more joy than the proud march of day.

There's a spell in the still ev'ning hour,
In the purple that mantles the sky,
When the wild bosom thrills to its power,
And pants with the charm of its die.

To Sophia.

Farewell ! a word which hath been, and must be.

Byron.

I CANNOT say farewell, farewell,
A word to both so big with sorrow ;
I have not heart to ring the knell
Of bliss to-day that hath no morrow :
For we shall neither either see,
Save in the hour of minstrelsy.

My lips are parch'd, my head swims round,
I feel from Hope for ever parted ;
And, while thou sobb'st that fatal sound,
I seem like one quite broken-hearted :
For what is night or day to me,
Without thy strains of minstrelsy ?

Thou weep'st—nay, love, that scalding tear
Those silken eyelids shall not pass ;
I 'll kiss it off—By Heavens, I swear
I ne'er did kiss a lovelier lass !
By Heavens, I swear thy kiss to me
Glues in its honey'd minstrelsy !

I know that I shall wildly sip,
As I have wildly sipp'd before,
The joy that burns on many a lip,
Where fragrant poison sparkles o'er;
But thine alone shall ever be
My theme of glorious minstrelsy.

Haply some liberal blue-eyed Swede
Might learn to love, and love to bless—
Alas! too soon my heart may feed
On beauty and on happiness.
Yet deem not, pensive Dane, that she
Shall steal one note of minstrelsy.

And in my own more brilliant land
There's many a maid, however coy,
Chisel'd by Nature's wanton hand
In all the lineaments of joy,
Yea, lovely as thyself to see,
Yet lacks thy soul of minstrelsy.

The calm and concentrated mien,
The thousand nameless charms of sense,
The tender tone, the eye serene,
Where dignity is eloquence,
Are there—but nowhere should I find
Thy poetry and romance of mind.

The British maid is wise as fair,
Well versed in deep philosophy,

Minerva's own especial care ;
But, Love, she lacks the energy
That inspiration will impart—
The mighty madness of the heart !

And so farewell, my minstrel Bride,
I feel that thou wilt think of me ;
And, let whatever may betide,
My sweetest thoughts will rest on thee,
And hail thee still my Muse of fire,
To strike with holier aim my lyre.

And yet, and yet, I cannot breathe
That deep and death-bed word to thee,
And draw the dagger from its sheath,
To stab young Hope in memory !
My heart is cold—I reck not why—
Thou know'st how well we loved—and so good bye.

Hadersleben, Oct. 1821.

STRANGE NOTIONS.

I LOVE the friendship of the stars by night ;
I love the honeysuckle shade by day ;
I love the company of the liberal wind ;
I love the courtesy of forest trees ;
I love the distant sound of harp and song ;
I love the evening blush of the broad sea ;
I love a soft bed by a haunted stream ;
I love the moon's kiss on the quivering wave ;
I love the words that fall from the loose boughs ;
I love the twilight visions of gone ages ;
I love a coral branch and the red rose ;
I love a white hand and a fringed blue eye ;
I love the diamond light of pity's tear ;
I love to see a little child asleep ;
I love the silence of my midnight chamber ;
I love the lamp that is expiring there ;
I love the volumes that are shut till morn ;
I love the thought that comes in loneliness ;
I love the apprehension of all these ;
I love to sleep away the sight of men ;
I love to wake, and find myself alone !

Love to find me when I sleep
(

Serenade :—*Daybreak.*

OPEN thy casement, Beauty, lo !
The fountains of the morning flow :
The golden rivers of the light
Stream through thy bow'r, Beauty bright !
Ah, linger not ; until I see
Thy glory, 'tis no morn to me.
Beautiful girl ! I'll wind a sparkling wreath
About thy brows, and taste thy fragrant breath.

Come forth ! I will not wander, love ;
The crown I offer thee is wove
Of blossoms the immortal Sun
Hath kiss'd and left his kiss upon ;
Such jewels are mine own to give,
As girdled maids have not who live
For ever in the sea deep, and I swear
To sow them in thy young and yellow hair.

Answer me : now thy curtains blue
Like heaven roll away, and true
To me, thy lover, are those eyes
Of light ; the maid Morn waking lies
On amber pillows ; stand awhile,
And listen, with that holy smile,
How wantonly the breezes fleet and far
Chase the coy music of my wild guitar.

THE VOW.

Maid from Hadersleben ! now
 Hearken to thy poet's vow ;
 Cease thy pretty foreign prattle,
 Nicht verstehen thy tittle tattle ;
 This shall be thy lover's lay,
 Je vous aime en verité !

By the tear that dims thine eye,
 By the music of thy sigh,
 By the graces which have crown'd thee,
 By the loves which play around thee,
 By that mouth like Cupid's bow,
 Fiora bella ti amo !

By thy desperate joys and pains,
 By the soul that fills thy veins,
 By that face so sparkling fair,
 By the blood that mantles there,
 By the heart I read and know,
*Zώη με, σάς αγαπῶ !**

By that passionate impress,
 By those blue eyes' deep loveliness,

* For my credit and classics' sake, I think it proper to notice this is modern Greek. I found it in a song of Lord Byron.

By the fires which through thee rove,
By lava lightning or love,
By all the Heaven that dwells in thee,
Mea vita; amo te !

By the loves we both have known,
By the joy so all our own,
By the kisses we have spoken,
And by many a mutual token
Sweetly bought by thee and me,
Hübsches madchen ich liebe sie !

By the thought we both were guessing,
By the hour which lacks no blessing,
By the life we 've had that 's past,
By the pang to come at last,
By the God of Heaven above,
By all that 's true, I love thee, Love !

SONG.

DELIGHT to my high-born eastern maid
With a star on her elegant bosom ;
A zone round her waist, and a delicate braid
On her head, of the ripe alma blossom !

Her form is as fine as the mountain's pride,
That bends when the light airs wake it ;
Like willow leaves by the fountain side,
Her hair chides the winds that shake it.

Her brow is deep shaded like autumn skies,
Pale brown when the mild moon's coming ;
And her voice is the music while daylight dies,
Still dear, like the wild bees' humming.

There's not such a girl among Scio's daughters ;
Her cheek is the damask flower, dashing
Off pearl dews and tear-drops, and on the quick waters
Her eye seems the broad sun flashing.

I hear her song, like the mermaid's song,
While the wood-nymphs, their loose robes falling,
On tiptoe listen the blue hills along,
And deem it some goddess calling.

I do remember something fair
Came once before me: tell me where.
Born of the winds, perhaps, a daughter
Of the rich morn or coral'd water.

I know no image like her, yet,
Methinks, when the round sun doth set
In strange skies, at that mellow hour
From spice-groves or the orange-bower,
With raven hair and rolling eye,
A figure, like my memory,
Might wander and might breathe upon
The hot brow till its pain be gone—
With words, like melancholy music, bless;
And make immortal with a kiss.

That form of beauty came no more
Since twilight on the ocean shore
Was beautiful, and night sublime
Walk'd the pale rocks, and joyous time
Saw all things lovely, and the light
That rode upon the vapours white
Was mildest, wood-nymphs bathed their feet
In fountains, the young Air spoke sweet
Syllables, tender flowers wept,
And, curtain'd with the silence, Summer slept.

AN ARTIST EXHIBITING A MASTER- PIECE.

You, sir, put forth that picture: soft, good Julio !
How precious is your burthen ! set it down,—
Admit a plume of light through yonder curtain.
Thus : heavenly Guido ! I beseech you, gentlemen,
Look at this face : there's wealth, sir, in the world—
Not with an eye that's restless or profane ;
That forehead will not suffer it : divine !
Is it the play about the lips you love ?
True : but the light below the temples : Gods !
The eye ! Sirs, which of you can bear its meaning ?
Oh rare contriver ! Where is such a marvel ?
Beautiful Nun ! How calmly at the world,
Which she has left behind, she looks, and seems . . .
To say, “ I owe you not a tear, oh world !
But I will weep for your more mighty woes.”
Sweet, sweet reproach ! I see it touches you ;—
You have kind thoughts and admirable judgment ;
And, look you, 'tis her throat—how like a swan !
And if that handkerchief were not—observe,
I would not for the world it should be otherwise—
But if it were not—you might view the urn
Of alabaster, where the patient heart
Is kept alive : I pray you leave me not,
Friends, till to-morrow : let us feast to-day

Upon the banquet I have set before you :
The whiteness of those arms is food for us,
The sacred union of those dear arms
Lightly across, to hush the heaving bosom.
The pure blood wanders calmly through those veins ;
Oh matchless art ! The day is waning now.
Lights, Julio ! Cover my picture, boy :
My friends, let 's talk the while—lights, Julio !

ACROSTIC.

For ever, and for ever, my young love,
One kiss!—And nigh the hidden Phocian stream,
Reflection, in some after hour, shall dream,
Helen, of thee, and to the leaf-strung grove
Echo shall breathe thy name, ere golden rest
Light on my eye-lid! while endiadem'd skies
Encourage the white moon to smile, like Love,
Nestled on some strange giant's ample breast:—
Dear child, one kiss! And let thy twin bright eyes
(As lucid arrows in a jewell'd quiver,
Vivid destructions!) sparkle in their joy:—
I'll have thee for my muse, and thou shalt know
Eternity, thy namesake; and shalt glow
Star-sceptred, near Aurora's azure Boy,

For ever, and for ever.

14 Feb. 1821.

NEW YEAR'S ODE,
for 1821.

A WAKE ! O ! Albion's spirit, wake
At Freedom's call, resume thine ancient fire,
To all thy former fame aspire,
Burst Europe's bonds, and bid her tyrants quake !

Hark ! the trump of Freedom sounds,
Every heart with hope rebounds.

A thousand banners are unfurl'd on high,
The vault of heaven returns the cry ;—
“ Death to the tyrant ! Freedom to the slave !
“ Reclaim the rights that Nature gave :
“ Let Europe trample in the earth
“ The impotence of power, the ignorance of birth !”

Shall Freedom wake in other climes,
Where man hath slumber'd many a tedious year ?
And shall her genius, shrinking here,
Mark us a marvel to all after-times ?

It cannot be, the patriot tide
Is flowing fast, and spreading wide ;
Soon shall it burst, and overflow the mound,
By reckless despots raised around :

The low'ring clouds are gathering fast,
And deeper grows the murmur of the threat'ning blast.

The long-enthralled sons of Spain,
The tawny Lusitanian feels the power ;
Parthenope forsakes the bower
Of moonlit luxury, and breaks her chain.
Upon Trinacria Freedom's ray
Bursts sudden with resistless day ;
The sunbright climes, beyond the western wave,
Have torn the bands that bound the slave ;
Columbia the last death-song sings
Of lordly tyrants, and of empty pageant kings !

See the morn of Freedom rise
Bright'ning glorious in our skies ;
Before the vivifying ray
The night of slavery melts away,
And superstition flies :
Reason rules with high dominion,
Genius plumes his eagle pinion,
Every patriot soul is burning,
Kindled with the sacred flame ;
Golden ages are returning,
Æras of eternal fame !

At Freedom's shrine the world shall homage pay,
E'en from the Atlantic, and its laughing Isles,
To where, on Indian realms, the morning ray
Bursts from the east, array'd in glowing smiles ;

From the red sands, in fiery waves that roll
Beneath the siroc blast, to Zembla and the pole.

Come, sacred Freedom ! come, not drest
As once thy semblance was, on Gallia's shore,
With felon dagger steep'd in gore,
And murder, perching on thy blood-stain'd crest !
Come, with awful holy mien,
Solemn step, and front serene ;
Upon thy path let circumspection wait,
And mercy, still suspending fate ;
Be wisdom also there, thy bark to guide,
Unerring through the perilous tide,
But courage too to brave the gale,
Strength the tough oar to ply, and skill to shift the
sail.

Sons of genius ! souls of fire !
Sweep with daring hand the lyre !
Not Aganippe's haunted stream
Did ever to the Theban's dream
Such argument inspire :
Faith and Truth shall reign victorious :—
Pomp unequall'd ! Triumph glorious !
Tyrant Power the neck is bending,
He hath own'd the nation's voice :
See the slaves their bonds are rending,
Europe, rise ! Rejoice ! rejoice !

Hail ! fair Britannia, queen of every sea,
Oft hath thine arm the bolts of victory hurl'd ;
Yet more triumphant, if we think thee free,
Than victory made thee o'er an adverse world :
Seize ! seize ! the laurel, bid thy sons be men ;
Begin the golden year, and be thyself again !

* * * * *

Il n'y a plus rien de commun entre elle et moi ; nous allons être étrangers
l'un à l'autre.

La Nouvelle Héloïse.

I'LL hymn to thee a long and fearful sound
Deep rooted in the heart, and hidden there,
All darkling as unwilling to be found,
Like some unsceptred Tyrant. I would bear
Much wrong and contumely, before I'd wound
My soul, by feebly voicing on the air
That parting breath, pealing, like passion's knell,
An earthquake of the sense—Farewell ! Farewell !

I blame thee not, my friend, myself I blame ;
I should have shunn'd thee in thy scornful hour,
I should have silent been for very shame,
To cast on such a soil my lonely flower ;
It was my all, though bloomless, I did name
Myself unto thee—thy benignant power
Hung o'er me, angel-like—I loved to think,
That, when I lit the steep, thou'dst save me from the
brink.

Vain trust ! As vain, girl, as a lover's dream ;—
And what have thou and I in common ? Life ;
And all is said.—How could I ever deem
Thy breast my casket, though thy veins be rife
With gentle seeming ? The full crimson stream
Of passion's conquest, or of virtue's strife,
That rushes heartward, as the senses reel,
Thou art not made to know, and need'st not fear to feel.

Thy heart's strung tones are wrought with heavenly
wires,
Thou talk'st and act'st so passionless and high ;
Whilst I am rasher than the forest fires,
That ignite at the core, until they die :
Nor love, nor hate, nor piety, inspires
Thy bosom to the luxury of a sigh,—
And thou canst hurt a friend, as thou hast me—
So as I'd blush to use an enemy.

Oh ! only unto thee ! Only to thee !
My heart would dart all madly on my tongue
To every one besides ; a mystery,
Round which suspicion, like a tendril, clung,
And if, in some warm moment's liberty,
One wanton word fell many words among,
Too thoughtless in its utterance to offend,
Should you for this have sacrificed a friend ?

I sail for lovelier shores and sultrier climes,
Nor yield to fancied ills or friendship's scorns :

Oh ! I will bask in love ! I 'll feed on rhymes !
I 'll roll in sunshine, and I 'll ride on storms !
I leave thee with a blessing ; and betimes
Forgive, as thou art forgiven ! He reforms,
Whose errors are his crimes,—but as to *you* !
Cold friend, and false, adieu ! Thou icicle, adieu !

A BASKET.

Namque humeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum
 Venatrix, dederatque comam diffundere ventis,
 Nuda genu, nodoque sinus collecta fluentes.

Virgil.

HIPPOLYTUS AND IANTHE.

HIPPOLYTUS.

WHO calls?

IANTHE.

"Tis I : it is Ianthe : hush !
 I would not have the Wind-god hear me say it.
 There is my hand : I am an Oread :
 My everlasting home is the green mountain ;—
 I bear the silver bow of pale Diana ;
 And chaster is the hand you keep for me,
 Boy, than the virgin flower whose delicate birth
 The lisping wind of spring-time knows not of.
 Come with me, and breathe not my name, Ianthe.
 The Fauns must never whisper it of me
 If I converse with you, Hippolytus;
 (They call you so : I know you.) Yonder grove
 Is sacred unto me, and never, never
 Comes the white moonbeam visiting unheard

Through any careless bough : let us go thither—
 You are a gentle boy : Oh ! I have mark'd you
 Gathering the blossoms that lament by night,
 And wreathing of the fairest, all throughout
 Your soft and beauteous hair : Come, let me see—
 What have you in your basket ?

HIPPOLYTUS.

A white rose,

And sweet amaracus *.

IANTHE.

For Hymenæus ?

Ah ! you will wed the bright Leucothöe
 When summer comes again ; yet stay with me ;
 You shall not wrong her tender faith ;—no, no,
 Not in a word : under this parent oak,
 Whose soothing leaves deepen tranquillity,
 Repose, and let me pour into your lap
 Fruits golden, such as Jove's immortal son
 Ravish'd from the Hesperian paradise :
 Give me the basket ; fill the rest with flowers.
 Here is the myrtle bough sacred to Venus :
 Beauteous Anemone, whose lips are purple
 With drinking the rich blood of loved Adonis :
 The rose, once clear as Parian marble, since
 Crimson with beauty's wound, weeping red tears ;
 And here the melancholy sun-flower, once
 A dark Egyptian girl, passionate Clytie,
 Beloved of crowned Apollo, and forsaken ;

* Wild marjoram, which, with roses, was wont to be offered to Hymen.

She, conscious of her wrong, with mild complaint,
 Affectionate, and full of grief, for ever
 Turns to her God, and lives upon the light :
 Here is the wan Narcissus ; pretty boy,
 Poor with abundance*, and the truest lover——
 He died of his own beauty ; *think of that* :
 Lo ! the pure laurel, chaste eternal Daphne !
 Never betray'd by snow or sunbeam ; and
 The blue retiring violet, so elegant
 In tears, gay Hyacinthus once, caress'd
 By yellow Phœbus ; him the jealous breath
 Of Zephyr smote, and shook this perfume off
 From his ambrosial hair : dark Aconite,
 Dress'd like a King, and born when great Alcides
 Produced the monster-dog, hell's guardian,
 Before the day, whereat the creature sicken'd,
 And from the pregnant earth, wet with his foam,
 Arose this flower, deadly and beautiful :
 Cypress, for thoughts too gay, in time gone by
 A noble youth, who grew up with a fawn
 And cherish'd it, that when the fool was kill'd,
 Wept him to death, and still for ever weeps.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Precious Ianthe ! 'tis the rarest gift——

IANTHE.

The lily for Leucothœ !

HIPPOLYTUS.

Oh, sweet !

* “Inopem me copia fecit.” Ovid’s Metam.

IANTHE.

Her tresses, (how you blush!) are raven black,
And dearly may the milk-white blossom sleep
Upon their lustre, like a silver cloud
Floating alone upon the midnight heavens.

HIPPOLYTUS.

But it will perish.

IANTHE.

No, it shall not ever :

I charm this basket,—over all its plants
The mystic word hath gone :—they are immortal.
Hist ! A wave's splash ! Our voices have disturb'd
A Naiad, who hath leap'd from out her spring,
And having wrung her dripping hair, and cast
It like a veil, over her marble neck,
Stands panting and dismay'd, with a fair finger
Sealing her coral lip, ready for flight.

I will be near you on your wedding-day :
Away ! Away ! Speak not of me ;—farewell !

THE END.

LONDON :
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THE VAMPIRE,

second edition,

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

By ST. JOHN DORSET.

“ Quid enim mali aut sceleris fingi aut excogitari potest quod non
ille conceperit ? ” Cicero.

“ Woe to that hour he came and went.” Byron.

“ We are glad to perceive that dramatic poetry is resuming its due station in the literature of our country, through the influence of some of the highest geniuses of our times. In all that constitutes the real excellence of such compositions, the tragedies of the last few years bear a loftier character than nearly all their predecessors of the past century—THE VAMPIRE deserves to be placed high in the ranks of its compeers, not only for its positive merits, but also for the manifest indications it contains of future excellence. The fable is one of invention merely:—the incidents few, simple, clearly developed, and full of strong and healthy excitement. We have room to say no more than that it regards the fortunes of a bold and accomplished adventurer, eminently gifted with powers of mind and person to fascinate and subdue all who come within the sphere of their influence,—but which, from an awful deficiency of all noble and human sympathies, are exerted only to wither and destroy. With the fate of such a being, the author has skilfully linked the event of a generous and well contrived conspiracy;—the happiness of a lovely and confiding maiden, and the fame and fortunes of a crowned queen; and all these high interests are blasted and ruined by his fearful interference. *The fifth act is marked with uncommon power, and written in the highest mood of poetry.* The scene of the queen’s death is truly awful. We find many felicitous turns of expression, and every where meet with evidence of the author’s preference for the pure and powerful language of our greatest writers, and we are anxious to recommend his play to our readers,

for the simplicity, earnestness, and passion of the poetry,
and the deep and well sustained interest of the story."

New Monthly Mag.

"THE TRAGEDY OF THE VAMPIRE is a work of original and unaffected beauty, and its imperfections in point of dramatic effect are overbalanced and forgotten in its rare and genuine merits. The style is in the happiest freedom of blank verse, and evidently shows the author's deep acquaintance with the stories of Beaumont and Fletcher: it is remarkable for the grace and elegance of its composition. This scene (1st in 4th act) is a masterly effort, and we transcribe it.—It is a scene (2d, 4th act) replete with tenderness and feeling.—The concluding scene is one of exquisite beauty—the whole is a grand conception. Abdallah having fought his way to the sea-shore finds all chance of escape at an end, and resolves to await his enemies among the rocks. There he meets the unhappy Nourayah, who, aided by the darkness of the night, had escaped the fury of the populace, who were then seeking her, bent on her destruction. The night is tempestuous, the waves are seen agitated, and the shouts of the pursuers are heard at intervals, mingling with the storm. She recognises Abdalla, and clings to him for protection. Their enemies are fast approaching, and all means of refuge, save one, are at an end.—From the very copious extracts we have made, the reader will perceive that we are fully justified in our favourable opinion of this Tragedy. We trust soon to see another effort of this author's genius, whose present work we hail as an omen, that the dormant genius of Tragedy is at last awaking from the death-like slumber in which it has so long reposed."

London Mag.

See also the *Champion*, and the *Independent*, &c. &c.

* * * *Very shortly will be published,*

THE CARDINAL,

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

By ST. JOHN DORSET.

